Vol 8 **The War Illustrated** N° 184

SIXPENCE — Edited by Sir John Hammerton — JULY 7, 1944

VICTORY FOR OUR ARMOUR NEAR BAYEUX was the outcome of the first heavy clash with enemy tanks in Normandy on June 9, 1944; above, a British tank crew, wrapped in blankets, is seen taking a brief rest between spells of violent action. Brought across miles of water by ship, or landed from the air, our armoured monsters pushed on inland. Trying to stem the flow, especially in the Caen area, the Germans threw into battle increasing numbers of tanks, including the big Mark VI Tigers. *Photo, British Official*

Our Roving Camera Speeds Airborne Troops

ON A SCALE never before attempted, the use of airborne troops in the Allied invasion of France met with such quick and outstanding success as to remove any last doubt as to the value of this form of modern warfare. Air landings at specially selected points in many cases caught the enemy completely by surprise, and all tasks allotted to the airborne forces were carried out. In the early stages of the assault, approximately 24,000 parachute troops, equivalent to two airborne divisions, were flown over in 1,000 Army transport planes; thousands more went by glider. **See stories in pp. 120 and 121.**

Stirling aircraft line a runway in Britain, preparatory to taking off with their loads (1). Parachute troops fill the inside of one aircraft (2); others read with anticipatory pleasure the pointed remarks chalked on the side of their glider (3). Crossing the Channel troop-carrying planes tow gliders (4); below them, leaving a broad wake on the water, are Allied naval units, also headed for France.

Photos, British and U.S. Official

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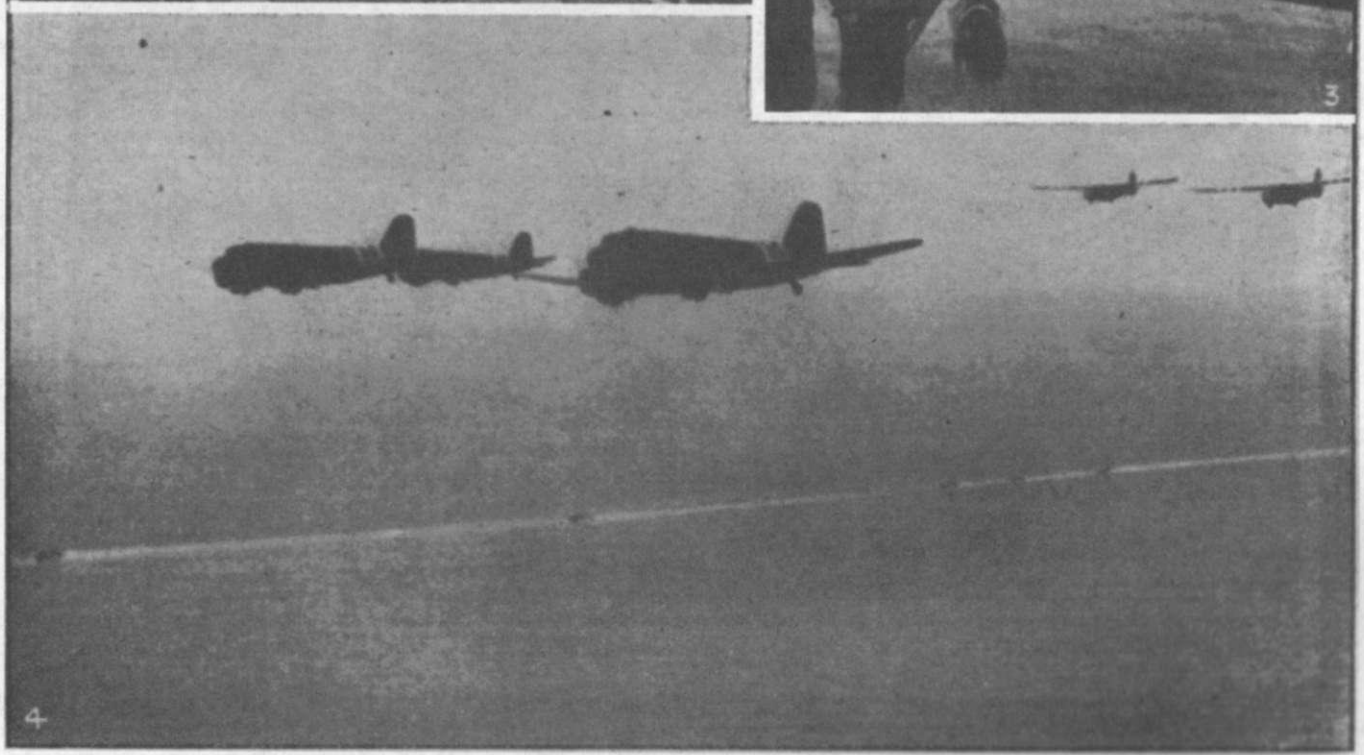
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THE BATTLE FRONTS

by Maj.-Gen. Sir Charles Gwynn, K.C.B., D.S.O.

It is high time to stop using the term Second Front. It has long ceased to be accurate, though it conveniently defined our strategic aims. Now that those aims have taken concrete shape we should, I think, talk of the Western Front until such time as the general term is superseded by the names of its sub-divisions.

The landings in Sicily and at Salerno gave some indication of the immense preparations that have to be made for a large-scale amphibious operation—sufficient at least to silence those who had clamoured for the immediate opening of a second front as if it were only necessary to give the order. Yet few can have realized the complexity of the task until D-Day was passed and General Montgomery's armies were safely established on the coast of Normandy.

Fewer still, I think, realized the risks of failure or the consequences of failure which might disastrously have affected the whole strategic situation and have prolonged the war indefinitely, even if it had not affected its ultimate issue. The mere fact that Rommel —who, if no great strategist, is at least an excellent tactician—was confident that the beach defences were impregnable should make us realize the greatness of our achievement and the risks of failure involved.

Before the war it was generally and justifiably held that it had become more than ever impracticable to land a large modern army with all its essential equipment on the coasts of a fully armed and prepared enemy. All the tactical advantages that modern weapons had conferred on the defence over the attack could be exploited even more effectively than in a purely land battle. While, strategically, the mobility conferred by mechanization and improvements in road and railway communication to a large extent reduced the advantage held by a seaborne force of being able to mask its intention till the last moment.

Even if a surprise landing could be effected (which was improbable in view of the potentialities of air reconnaissance and the strictly limited stretches of coast which at all favoured attack) the defenders' reserves could be moved to the danger point more rapidly than the attacking force could disembark in strength. Uncertainty of weather conditions and the necessity to capture a port which would ensure the uninterrupted landing of heavy material added considerably to the manifold difficulties of the invader.

Enemy's Labour and Ingenuity Finally Brought to Nought

What has brought this seemingly impossible enterprise into the category of practical operations and successful achievement in spite of the immense labour and ingenuity the enemy had expended in making security doubly sure? Primarily, it was the refusal of one man, or perhaps a small group of men, to admit impossibilities, and their courage and foresight in embarking on preparations extending over a period of years and on an unprecedented scale with one object in view —a triumph of Faith.

Obviously, the first essential was to establish such naval and air supremacy as would ensure a high degree of protection to the armada in its passage across the sea and during the actual landing. Yet preparations were set in motion long before it could be guaranteed that the requisite degree of supremacy would ever be attained. Actually it was recognized that the danger of underwater and air attack, especially at night, although it might be minimized, could never be completely eliminated and the risks were courageously accepted. Some idea has been given by the Press of the immense organization that had to be built up; of the numbers of ships that had to be constructed and assembled, of the great variety of landing craft that had to be designed and built, and of the amount of specialized training that had to be given to all concerned in the operation. Yet I doubt if any single brain can grasp the full complexities of the preparations. They were the achievements of a great team working together to a single end, but with highly specialized functions; and the results were amazing. (See article in p. 110.)

What impresses me most is that this immense undertaking was launched in the full knowledge that the possibility of bringing it into fruition might never arise, and that, even if the opportunity materialized, vagaries

GENERAL EISENHOWER'S CALL TO THE INVASION TROOPS

Soldiers, sailors and airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force! You are about to embark upon the great crusade toward which we have striven these many months. The eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you.

In company with our brave Allies and brothers-in-arms on other fronts, you will bring about the destruction of the German war machine, the elimination of Nazi tyranny over the oppressed peoples of Europe, and security for yourselves in a free world.

Your task will not be an easy one. Your enemy is well trained, well equipped and battle-hardened. He will fight savagely.

But this is the year 1944! Much has happened since the Nazi triumphs of 1940-41. The United Nations have inflicted upon the Germans great defeats, in open battle, man-to-man.

Our air offensive has seriously reduced their strength in the air and their capacity to wage war on the ground. Our Home Fronts have given us an overwhelming superiority in weapons and munitions of war, and placed at our disposal great reserves of trained fighting men.

The tide has turned. The free men of the world are marching together to victory. I have full confidence in your courage, devotion to duty and skill in battle. We will accept nothing less than full victory.

Good luck! And let us all beseech the blessing of Almighty God upon this great and noble undertaking.

Order of the Day issued to each individual of the Allied Expeditionary Force, June 6, 1944.

of the weather or other unforeseeable circumstances might lead to disastrous failure in the course of a few hours. That so great a measure of success has been achieved is due mainly to the courage and efficiency of the human element—sailors, soldiers and airmen—and the perfection of the equipment which they operated. Perhaps especial credit should be given to the efficiency of the Navy, including the Merchant Service, which was fundamental to the success of the operation. When one considers the number of amateurs recruited into these Services, and called on to carry out unfamiliar tasks often requiring a great display of initiative, it may well be questioned whether any but a nation with natural maritime instincts could have adapted itself to an undertaking so far outside the range of normal experience of war.

The success of the initial landing, apart from these considerations, turned, I think, on three bold decisions, all of which contributed an element of surprise. First and most courageous was the decision to start the operation in what the enemy deemed were prohibitive weather conditions. General Eisenhower presumably must have been ultimately responsible for the decision, though he could hardly have made it without the concurrence of his Naval advisers whose professional responsibility must have been even greater.

I cannot believe that the decision would have been made if it had not previously been decided, breaking away from all precedent, to start landing at low tide. For in a rough sea the enemy's elaborate underwater defences would surely have proved an impassable obstacle. Now that it has been tried out, the landing at low tide may seem to have been an easy solution of the problem of dealing with the underwater obstacles on which the enemy so greatly relied—yet it was not a solution that would seem to have occurred to Rommel or to the designers of the defence system, strangely enough.

Courageous Decisions Helped to Win Battle of the Beaches

Of course, it involved the exposure of the assaulting troops to fire for a longer time. In the past it would also have meant manhandling heavy weapons over long distances. The possibility of landing tanks and other mechanical vehicles from the leading landing craft and the effective covering fire which could be directed by Naval guns and aircraft on the enemy's weapons sited to bear on the beaches, greatly reduced these former disadvantages; and obviously the importance of being able to clear passage through the obstacles while they were exposed at low tide outweighed them. Rommel, confident in the impregnability of underwater obstacles covered by fire, had apparently committed an unduly high proportion of his available troops to his forward defences and trusted to his armoured reserves being sufficient to counter-attack at any points where his front might possibly be penetrated.

Also, there was the decision to land a large force of airborne troops in advance of the sea landing. It was a courageous decision, for if the seaborne force had failed to get ashore or had been seriously delayed, the airborne force must have been sacrificed to a man. In the event, the airborne force not only accounted for some of the enemy's weapons which bore on the beaches but, what was probably more important, engaged enemy reserves which might have been used in early counter-attacks on the beach-head.

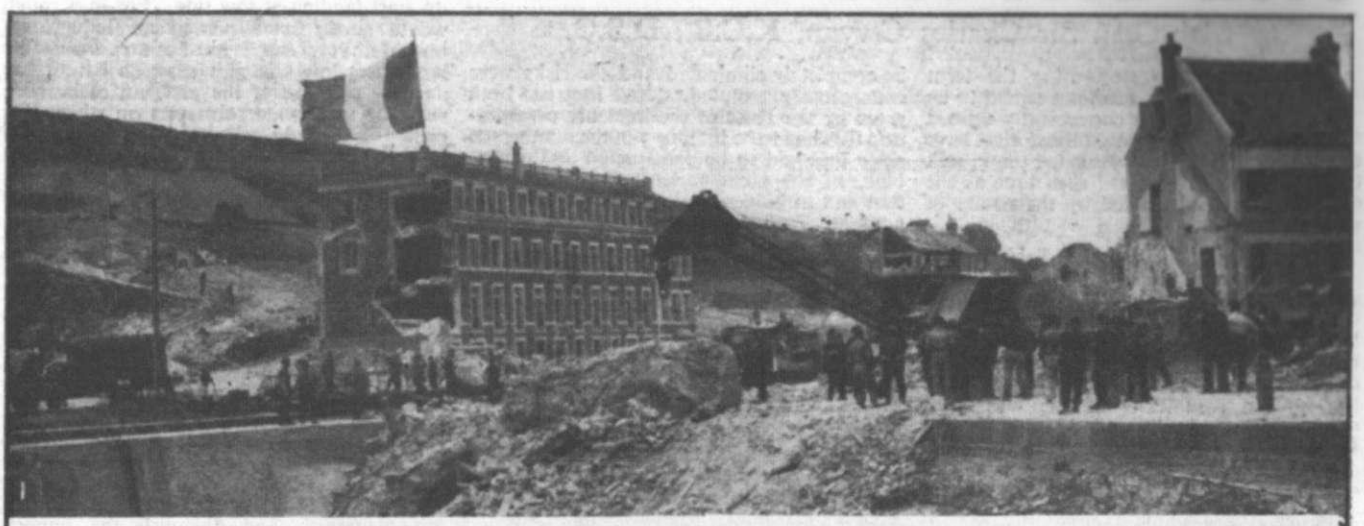
Establishment of Bridge-head Primarily for Offense

These decisions all contributed to the winning of a protective beach-head. Thenceforward, disembarkation could proceed with little interference by the enemy. There remained to be accomplished, however, the establishment of a bridge-head covering a sufficient area to admit of the deployment of forces adequate to undertake major offensive operations. The establishment of a beach-head is essentially a defensive step—but a bridge-head, though partially intended to provide a defensive position in depth in which an enemy counter offensive in force can be met, has primarily an offensive object.

At the time of writing, the battle of the bridge-head is still in progress. Much has been accomplished owing to the consistently offensive action of our troops, which from the first has compelled Rommel to use his reserves piecemeal in fierce costly counter-attacks, and to the delays imposed on the movements of his strategic reserves caused by air attacks on his road and railway communications. The battle of the bridge-head cannot, however, be considered to have been conclusively won until all enemy attempts to forestall our major offensive operations have been defeated, and until we are in possession of the port of Cherbourg as a guarantee that an uninterrupted volume of supplies and heavy equipment can be maintained. For instance, without an adequate port at which rolling stock and other railway material can be landed, our armies would have to operate without railway communications.

Readers are referred to map in page 106

After the D-Day Storm that Smote the Hun



THE ALLIES cracked it, then a bulldozer (one of many) pushed pieces of it into the sea, aided by a crane; the section of "West Wall" being dealt with (1) is at Port en Bessin, stormed by Royal Marine Commandos during the initial landings in Normandy. Two members of an Allied tank crew stretch out for forty winks; others lean against it, making the most of the opportunity to write home (2). Letters and parcels from home reached the beach-head soon after fighting began; a batch is being sorted (3) for delivery. General de Gaulle, instigator of the resistance movement after France collapsed in June 1940, returned to his native land again on June 14, 1944, on a short visit; he toured liberated areas, and at Bayeux received a tremendous welcome (4). Thousands of men, women and children sang the Marseillaise.

Photos, British Official, Keystone

Britain and Canada Fight as One in Normandy

WITH BRITISH TROOPS, who are seen passing a German Mark V Panther tank (1) knocked out during grim fighting in the Caen area of Normandy, Canadian units are playing a great part in the liberation of Europe, and here in the ruins of a French house (2), from which they have just ejected the Germans who held it, Canadian infantry watch for further enemy movement, through a hole they have knocked in the wall (see also p. 114). Mounted at the edge of a cornfield, a Vickers machine-gun (3) is ready to deal with enemy lurking ahead. Since Bayeux fell on June 8, 1944, British troops have consolidated their positions and have moved southward; in battles in built-up areas our forces sometimes enter one end of a main street as the Germans retreat out of the other: (4) a Bren-gunner knows how to deal with this particular situation.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright; Associated Press

THIS RHINO FERRY (centre background), laden with trucks and ambulances for delivery on the Normandy invasion coast, is seen leaving its mother vessel—a big tank landing craft. The Rhino Ferry, of U.S. design, and made of pre-fabricated hollow boxes of light steel, can be used for pontoon-bridging the short distance between landing ships and beach, or employed as a wharf, or dry-dock or, as this photograph shows, as a self-propelled barge.

Photo, British Official

THE WAR AT SEA

by **Francis E. McMurtrie**

THOUGH certain of the details have still to be filled in, enough is now known of the Allied invasion of Normandy to make it plain that it is the greatest as well as the most successful combined operation that has ever been undertaken. After all their efforts to ascertain where the blow was most likely to fall, the Germans were in the end taken by surprise. Over 4,000 ships of every kind, together with immense numbers of landing craft, were able to proceed across the Channel, breach the enemy coast defences and land large armies where desired, all without appreciable interference by the enemy sea or air forces.

This vast armada must have been collected from ports all over the United Kingdom, though the greater proportion was concentrated beforehand in southern harbours. To ensure surprise, it may be assumed that the use of wireless was restricted to a minimum; thus communications needed to be severely limited. Everybody concerned seems to have known exactly what had to be done, so that the operation of crossing the Channel and landing the troops was carried through without a hitch.

SUPERIOR sea power was the foundation on which this success was based. Not only was ample tonnage available, in the shape of merchant vessels and landing craft, to transport the troops to the beaches, but very strong naval forces were provided for duty as escorts, for the bombardment of German gun emplacements, and to clear the minefields which presented the most dangerous obstacle of all. After the landings had been completed, these naval forces continued to support the invasion by shelling enemy concentrations of tanks and artillery, and protecting the sea supply routes against attack by enemy light craft. In fact, sea power played just as important a part as it did in the North African and Sicilian landings.

In Washington it has been revealed that the contribution of the United States Navy to the operation numbered 1,500 ships, comprising the battleships Nevada, Texas and Arkansas, the heavy cruisers Augusta, Quincy and Tuscaloosa, over 30 destroyers, and large numbers of destroyer escorts, transports and landing craft. It should be explained that "destroyer escort" is the official rating of an American type of escort vessel, corresponding to British frigates of the "Captains" class.

British warships numbered about twice as many as American, and are known from Press reports to have included the battleships Nelson, Rodney, Warspite and Ramillies; cruisers Ajax, Apollo, Arethusa, Argonaut, Belfast, Bellona, Black Prince, Ceres, Danae, Diadem, Enterprise, Frobisher, Glasgow, Hawkins, Mauritius, Orion, Scylla, and Sirius; destroyers Algonquin, Ashanti, Beagle, Brissenden, Eskimo, Haida, Huron, Javelin, Kelvin, Melbreak, Scourge, Sioux, Tartar, Urania, Versatile, Vidette, Wanderer and Wrestler; the monitor Roberts; frigates Duff, Stayner, Tyler and Torrington; and the auxiliaries Glenearn, Glenroy, Hilary, Prince David and Prince Robert. Of these ships, the Algonquin, Haida, Huron, Sioux, Prince David and Prince Robert belong to the Royal Canadian Navy, the growth of which since 1939 has been absolutely phenomenal.

More than 200 minesweepers of various types formed an important element of this fleet, together with a number of warships belonging to our European Allies. There were the French cruisers Georges Leygues and Montcalm, with the destroyer La Combattante, in which General de Gaulle took passage for his visit to Normandy; the Polish cruiser Dragon and destroyers Blyskawica, Krakowiak and Piorun; the Norwegian destroyers Glaisdale, Stord, and Svenner; and the Dutch gunboats Flores and Soemba. Two Italian destroyers are also believed to have been present.

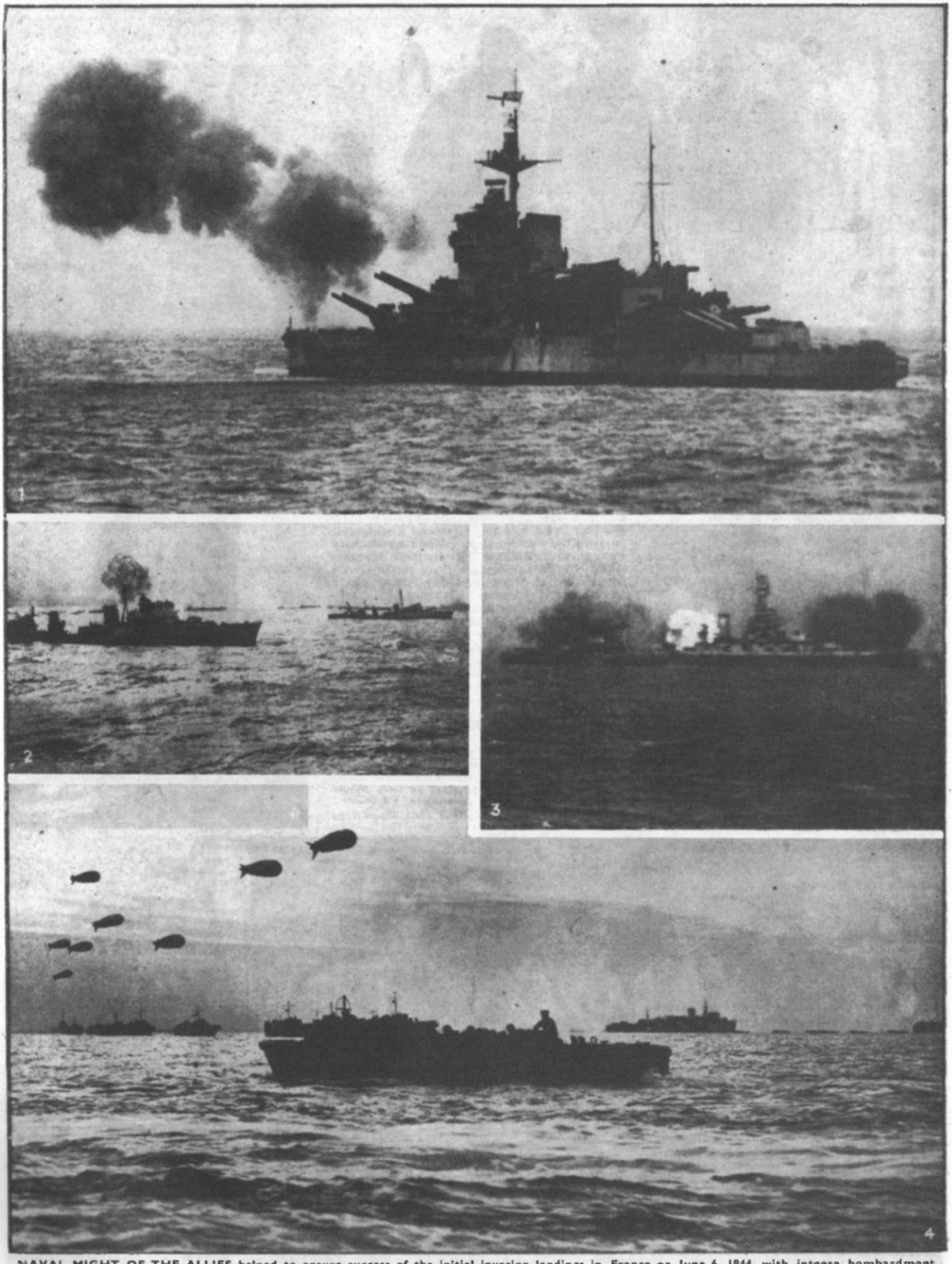
ONE of the surprises of this operation has been the rapidity with which naval guns have knocked out shore ones. While there is no doubt that fire control methods have improved out of all knowledge since the Belgian coast bombardments of the 1914-18 war, it is still true that a gun mounted in a battery on shore has definite advantages over one in a ship. There is a limit to the amount of armour that a warship can carry, but a fort can be protected to any extent desired. A ship can be sunk, but a silenced battery can be re-established, repaired or re-manned.

Yet in the last few weeks the naval gun has triumphed every time. One reason for this has been the thoroughness of air reconnaissance, enabling the exact position of every gun emplacement to be ascertained, so that it can be wiped out by an overwhelming concentration of fire. Spotting of the fall of shot from the air has been developed till it is almost an exact science, depending largely upon very carefully co-ordinated communication by signal between ship and observer. Previous experience in Italy and elsewhere has also borne good fruit. Having said all this, it still remains a fact that the gunnery of the Allied warships has been exceedingly good, testimony to the keenness and trained efficiency of naval officers and men. That these statements are in no degree exaggerated may be judged from the chorus of praise for the achievements of the naval guns from the Allied armies and from independent Press observers afloat and ashore.

UP to the time of writing, no news has come of Allied naval losses, beyond the statement that two U.S. destroyers were sunk, and reports of landing craft wrecked. Though German claims in this connexion may generally be disregarded as exaggerated out of all proportion to the truth, it is significant that on this occasion they have been unusually modest. Their own losses, on the other hand, have been severe, having regard to the few ships at their disposal. On June 7 three enemy destroyers were attacked by Coastal Command aircraft in the Bay of Biscay. One of these was set on fire, a second slowed down perceptibly, and a third had stopped when last seen. Attacks were also made on the same date upon coastal craft of the type which the Germans call S-boats, but which for no logical reason are commonly referred to as E-boats. Two of these were sunk and a third may have shared their fate.

A day later another enemy m.t.b. was attacked with rockets by fighter aircraft and was almost certainly destroyed. Off Ushant a force of German destroyers was brought to action by six British destroyers; one of the enemy ships was torpedoed and sunk and a second was driven ashore. In other encounters more than a dozen German m.t.b.s and motor minesweepers and several armed trawlers were lost, while air attacks on the harbours of Havre and Boulogne are believed to have accounted for a good many more. Some of these losses have been admitted by the enemy. We lost a motor torpedo boat in one engagement.

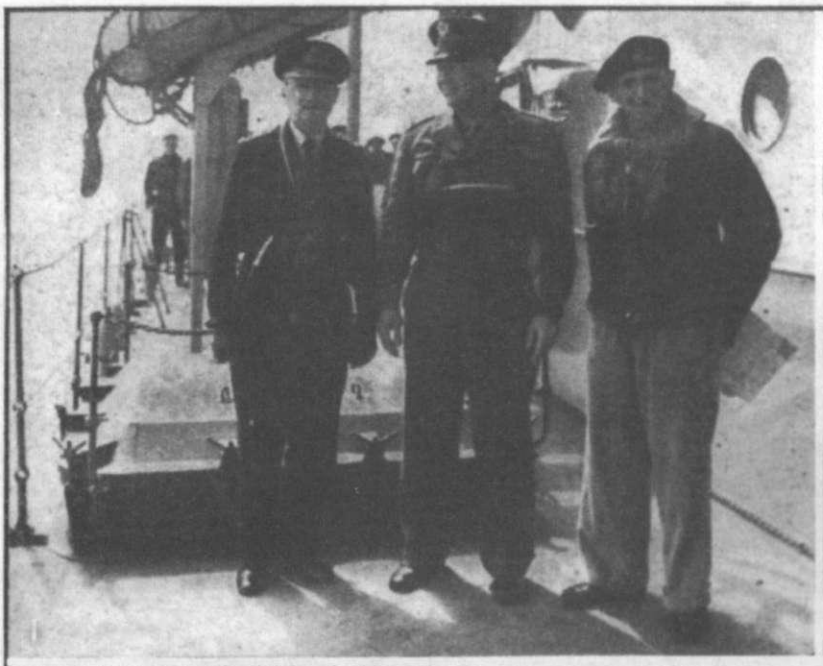
Great Sea Guns Blast Hitler's French Coast



NAVAL MIGHT OF THE ALLIES helped to ensure success of the initial invasion landings in France on June 6, 1944, with intense bombardment of the beach-head areas, and later supported our troops advancing inland. H.M.S. Warspite, veteran British battleship, pounds the coast with her 15-in. guns (1). Closer inshore destroyers add to the softening-up process (2), and the U.S. battleship Texas joins in (3). Valuable part in the invasion operations was taken by the Royal Canadian Navy; a landing craft (4, in foreground) from H.M.C.S. Prince David, laden with Canadian troops, heads for a Normandy beach. See stories in pp. 122, 123.

Photos, British Official; Royal Canadian Navy, Associated Press

These Men Lead the Mighty Liberation Forces



OFF A BEACH-HEAD in Northern France, and close to the battles there raging, one of the most significant conferences of this war took place on the afternoon of June 7, 1944. For four and a half hours, General Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, with Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay, Allied Naval Commander, cruised there on board a British warship. General Montgomery joined them to discuss the situation.

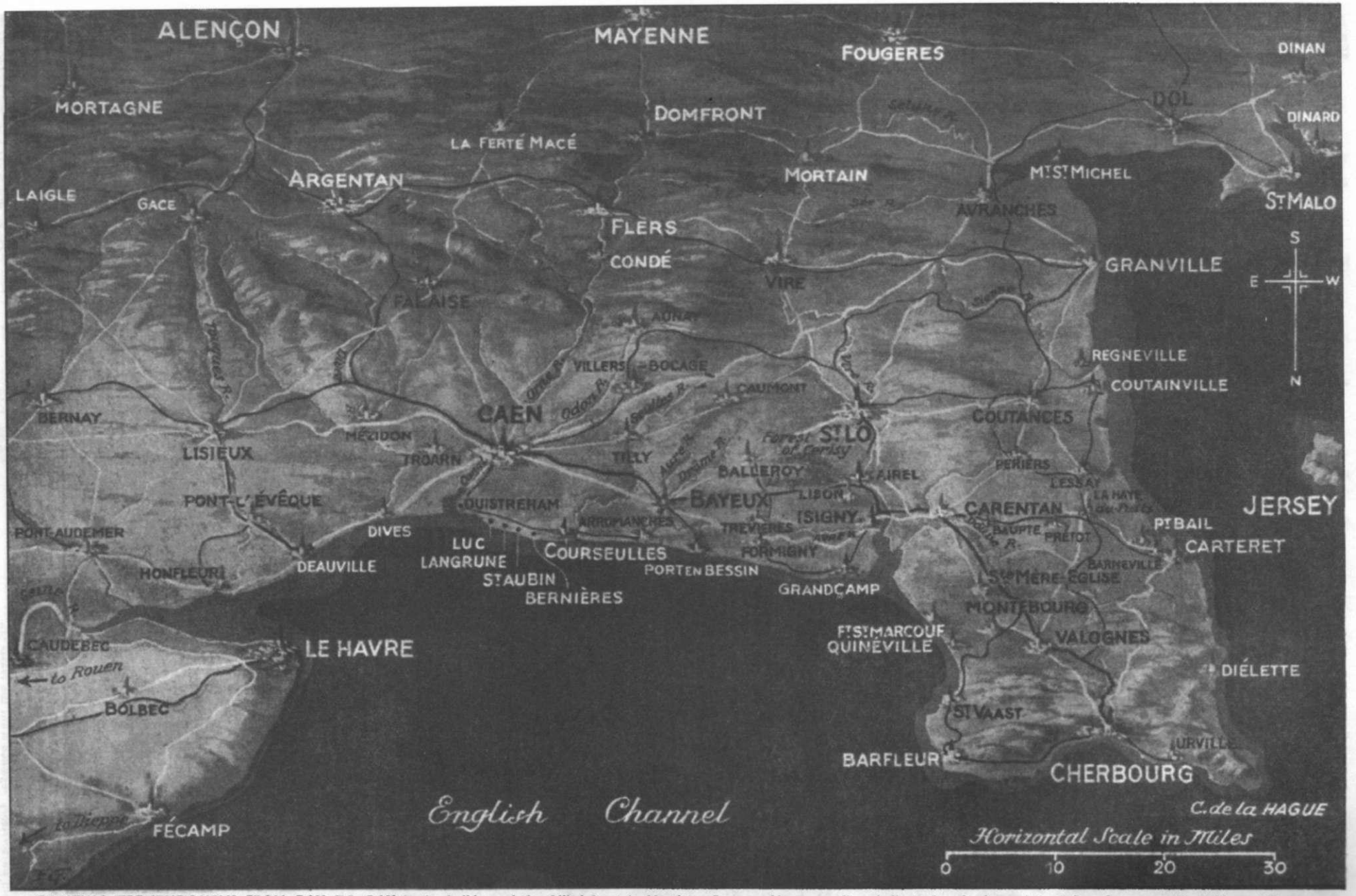
The Allied commanders on deck after their cabin conference (1)—Gen. Eisenhower (centre), Adm. Ramsay (left), Gen. Montgomery (right). On a beach U.S. invasion commanders "talked things over." (2—left to right)—Rear-Adm. A. G. Kirk, Commander of the Western Naval Task Force ; Lt.-Gen. Omar Bradley, Commander of the U.S. ground invasion forces ; Rear-Adm. J. L. Hall, Jnr., commander of an assault task force under Rear-Adm. Kirk. Air Chief Marshal Sir Trafford Leigh-Mallory, K.C.B., D.S.O., Commander-in-Chief Allied Expeditionary Air Force (3). Air Chief Marshal Sir Arthur Tedder, G.C.B., Deputy Supreme Commander (4). German prisoners turn to stare as Gen. Montgomery drives past in a jeep (5).

Photos, British Official ; Associated Press, Planet News

On Normandy Beaches Won Back from the Nazis

POWER OF OUR LIBERATING FORCES is indicated in this photograph (1) taken by a combat cameraman of the 9th U.S.A.A.F. It shows just a few of our big and little ships lying off a beach-head of Northern France, protective barrage balloons overhead. Digging in at a strong-point near the coast, British troops make themselves at home (2). Carrying bicycles, infantrymen wade the few remaining yards ashore to help consolidate our hold on territory regained from the Nazis (3).

Photos, British and U.S. Official, P.N.A.



MOUNTING TREMENDOUSLY FROM DAY TO DAY is the build-up of the Allied front in Northern France. Above, sea lines indicate four landing-points at Luc, Langrune, St. Aubin and Bernieres, where British and Canadian forces went in. On June 13, 1944, reports showed that Allied divisions along the Normandy front, starting from the eastern flank, included the British Sixth Airborne, the Third, the Fiftieth (Northumbrian), and the U.S. First divisions. Keypoints taken in the first fortnight's fighting spread out on our line of advance (roughly from Troarn to the port of Quinéville, whose capture was announced on June 15) include Bayeux, Isigny, Carentan and Ste. Mere-Eglise. By June 18 the Allies had swept due west from Carentan across the Cherbourg peninsula to Barneville-sur-Mer on its west coast, turning thense to its tip to break into Cherbourg on June 25.

Specially drawn for THE WAR ILLUSTRATED *by Felix Gardon*

With the 'Suicide Squads' Who Cleared the Way

An 80-mile breach in the vaunted West Wall on the Normandy coast lies at the back of our Armies in France. It can now be revealed how, in fantastic circumstances, British scientists stole the beach-head secrets, and how the first cracks of that breach were made by Royal Navy men and Marines and Royal Engineers shortly before zero hour on June 6, 1944.

WRIGGLING inland on their stomachs, blackened faces within an inch of the ground, a number of men who had been secretly landed in darkness at a point on the French coast went calmly about their work—probing here and there with special instruments, making notes and generally behaving as do fantastic visions in an uneasy dream. Noiselessly they continued their crawl, and no crack of a shot to indicate

ANTI-LANDING CRAFT OBSTACLES such as this being examined by a Naval officer and a Royal Engineer officer were intended to be invisible to oncoming craft at high tide. Their purpose was to rip a gaping hole in any vessel approaching the Normandy beaches.
Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

that their movements had been spotted by a German sentry.

Half a mile or more in different directions, members of this silent party went: scouring the beaches until they were satisfied their mission was well and truly completed. Assembled at last at the appointed rendezvous back at the sea-edge they packed up their instruments and the soil-samples which these had secured, put away their notes and departed for Britain, as mysteriously as they had arrived.

These "bright lads" (as one of them described his adventurous party) were civilian scientists, and the information and specimens they brought back with them proved of inestimable value to the authorities in whose hands lay the final planning which should put the assaulting troops ashore dead on time on D-Day—which yet lay months ahead.

A GREAT deal had been learned of the nature of the ground and of the defences where our landings might eventually take place, through innumerable photographs secured by low-flying planes of the R.A.F.; and, appertaining to the topography and terrain characteristics, old French books—some published before the 18th century—had yielded much that was of use. This midnight crawl of the scientists over Hitler's weapon-bristling beaches added the final footlines and marginal notes. Summed up, all this diversely gleaned information resulted in invasion-rehearsals in Britain which went far towards ensuring the assault troops' brilliant success.

From the crawling scientists' painstaking charting was discovered where treacherously soft patches of beach would be encountered, where boggy ground and slippery clay and firm or shifting sand would have to be negotiated. The beach obstacles they had sketched were reproduced on British beaches and assaulted by way of rehearsal. Landings were practised on British coastline stretches identical in nature with the Normandy beach-heads. Vehicle types to be used in the actual landing were decided upon as the outcome of these practices, and where necessary they were specially adapted. Angle of slope of the beaches made it desirable that some should be waterproofed (see article in page 110) and others considerably lightened.

At dawn of the day appointed for attack, suicide squads—they call themselves, officially Landing Craft Obstacle Clearance Units—went in to clear the way for the troops who were speeding in their wake across the Channel. These Naval parties and Royal Marines and Engineers had the task of clearing all the beaches of the sudden death so plentifully besprinkled there. Up to their necks in water they mostly worked at this touch-and-go job.

THERE were stout steel pickets with thick supporting rods driven into sand or turf or concrete, each 7 feet high and 8 feet wide and weighing a ton and a half, placed there to rip the bottoms out of landing craft and tanks. Other steel obstacles blocked beach exits. There were continuous rows of angle-iron hedgehogs, and rows of steel rails set upright or at a sharp angle. Timber tripod obstacles were concealed at high tide, to impale landing vessels. There were anti-boat cables, and numerous types of mines—some hanging from stake-ends and capable of being detonated at a touch.

Weary indeed, and bloodshot and nerve-frayed were these suicide men when at last they rested. They had been sniped at from pillboxes, and whilst they laboured some of the beach areas had been under bombardment by our own naval forces. They didn't talk much of their comrades who fell, but one swift picture of their ordeal has been given by a correspondent to whom one spoke:

It was the toughest job we've ever had. Some of our plans went just as scheduled and others all went screwy. For instance, we were a little late getting in and the water was higher than we expected. We had to work with water up to our necks, sometimes higher. Then there were the snipers. They were nipping us off as I was working with two blokes on a tough bit of element, when suddenly I found myself working alone. My two pals just gurgled and disappeared under water.

Naturally they could not deal in the short time at their disposal with all the thousands of deadly obstacles and booby traps that, hidden or exposed, littered the landing areas, and one officer observer has recorded how his craft was among the few that met with dire misfortune:

Her bottom had been ripped by one of the thousands of obstacles. With the water rising well over her engine-room plates, and her engines out of action, the Commanding Officer decided to beach her. At low tide it would be possible to patch her up and make the passage back to her home-port and carry on with the "shuttle-service." The tide receded a long way, to reveal an amazing sight on the beaches. Thousands of rusted iron girders, bolted together in threes like stacked rifles, had been driven into the clay and sand. Their jagged edges at high-tide either barely protruded above the water or, more often, were just submerged. Between them wooden stakes were driven into the beach to which shells, mines, and other under-water traps had been attached. How so few craft had sustained really serious damage was a miracle. That there was not a single landing-craft bigger than the smallest assault craft—and of these there were very few—actually sunk, throughout our sector, was a tribute to those who designed and built them, as well as to the seamanship of the crews.

Bulldozers smashed down, and mobile cranes tore away, iron girders and stakes with utmost speed to enable successive waves of assault craft to come in. There were great lines of barbed wire, and where this had not had gaps blown in it by the naval bombardment it had to be cut for the infantry to pass through and get at what ever chanced to lay immediately beyond—enemy trench systems, pill boxes and gun emplacements.

EACH man of the demolition parties carried T.N.T., and as their work took them farther up the beaches some were detailed to blast passages through concrete or masonry sea-walls which in some places were about 20 feet high and many feet thick—though nothing like a continuous "wall" was anywhere encountered. The solid "wall" as popularly visualized was a phantom of Nazi bluff; but what there was of it rocked and splintered throughout invasion day and intermittently throughout the night and next morning, and mines of every description continued to detonate.

"Occasionally" (said another war reporter) "the men dealing with them miss one, but not often. Then a man or vehicle sets it off, and the man goes to a hospital or a grave, and the vehicle to a repair crew or junk heap." . . . Salute to the Brave!

ENORMOUS EXPLOSIONS occurred on the French foreshore as enemy mines were touched off by such men as these of the Royal Navy. As members of Landing Craft Obstacle Clearance Units their task, in co-operation with Royal Marines and Engineers, was to deal with deadly obstructions in the path of our assault troops. How these "suicide squads" shaped on D-Day—and subsequently—is told in this page.

Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

'Blimey, it's Churchill!' the Soldiers Said

TO SEE FOR HIMSELF, Mr. Churchill crossed the Channel in the destroyer H.M.S. Kelvin and spent seven hours ashore on the Normandy beach-head on June 14, 1944. With him went General Smuts, Prime Minister of South Africa, and Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke, G.C.B., D.S.O., Chief of the Imperial General Staff. On the way across H.M.S. Kelvin bombarded a German position.

On the destroyer's bridge Mr. Churchill chats to Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke (1). From the duck which brings him ashore the Premier sets foot on French soil, to be warmly greeted by General Montgomery (2) and "mobbed" by working parties of Army and Navy men as he tours a captured town (3). German planes came over, but were engaged and driven off; the Premier, General Smuts, General Montgomery and Field Marshal Sir Alan Brooke watch the air battle (4). General Montgomery obtains information from fishermen (5) at a captured port.

Photos, British and U.S. Official

Reinforcements Move Up to the Western Front

IT MIGHT BE A COUNTRY LANE IN ENGLAND with care-free soldiers on a route march. But the scene is Normandy, and these infantrymen of ours are moving up to a front-line position. British Divisions now engaged in France include the 6th Airborne, and the 3rd and 50th (Northumbrian). The latter was in the spearhead of the British assault on D-Day, earning high praise for "a first-class performance in the face of very adverse conditions and stout enemy opposition." The 7th British Armoured Division also is busy out there.

Photo, British Official

Miracles of Planning Behind the Great Invasion

No less renowned a warrior than Marshal Stalin has paid tribute to the brilliant success of our assault on Western Europe. "In the whole history of war," he said, "there has not been any such undertaking, so broad in conception, so grandiose in scale and so masterly in execution." The military organization that helped to make this triumph possible is briefly outlined below:

TRAINS cancelled and trains late: these were annoyances suffered in varying mood by the civilian on the eve of D-Day—and promptly forgotten when, on the morning of June 6, 1944, the world thrilled to the announcement that a gigantic armada had crossed the Channel and the siege of North-Western Europe had commenced.

In vast camps and remote villages all over Britain extreme activity, surpassing anything that had gone before, had reigned whilst we finally gathered our assault forces and

MILITARY SIGN on a road leading to a British port of embarkation warns those who can't help not to hinder. The steady flow of invasion troops across Britain was assisted by the widening of roads and the strengthening of bridges. *Photo, British Official*

gave them the strength to do that which they are now accomplishing so magnificently. Roads echoed to the thunder of almost endless convoys as the appointed day approached; and on the railways fell an especially heavy burden—the transportation in two months of 230,000 soldiers criss-cross over the face of Britain to the several invasion marshalling centres, together with 12,000 tons of baggage.

In those eight weeks close on 2,000 special trains ran non-stop to ports whence the invasion was to be launched. Tanks and other war vehicles to the number of 7,000 went by rail. For heavy tanks special flat-bottomed wagons had had to be constructed, to the order of the War Office. To all this was added other stupendous traffic which cannot be specified here—yet complete order reigned where might have been expected chaos. The result was that every ship that in due course sailed across the Channel was loaded up with just that cargo for which it had been earmarked. Thus brilliantly shone just one of the many and almost bewilderingly varied facets of the scheme involving naval, land and air forces in a combined operation on the smooth running of which the whole fate of the gigantic venture hung as on a thread.

THE fact that Allied forces also were involved added to complications which, long before D-Day, had of sheer necessity to be smoothed into an indivisible and unconquerable power to shatter as speedily as possible the resistance of the enemy.

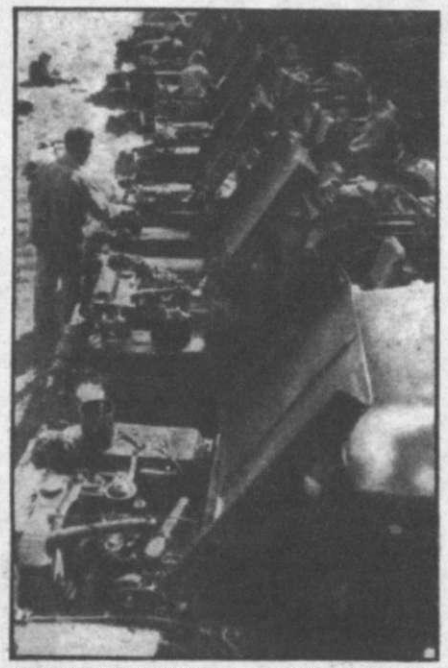
As far back as the closing days of 1941, when we were slowly recovering from the disastrous Dunkirk period of the previous year, this problem of landing an army in full strength on the mainland of Europe was engaging the keenest brains. But operations in the Mediterranean area had then to be given priority.

During that period the pattern of our ultimate plans was emerging. From Combined operations at St. Nazaire in March 1942, and in August at Dieppe, much was learned. The lay-out of the supposedly formidable West Wall was revealing its secrets to the British Intelligence Staffs. Invasion maps, covering all parts of Western Europe where operations might eventually take place, were prepared by the million; in this work practically every firm in Britain whose plant was capable of, or could be adapted to, the printing of maps was employed by the Survey Department of the War Office, the greatest precautions meanwhile being taken against leakage of any scrap of information likely to be of use to the enemy.

Operations against Sicily and the Italian mainland followed the Casablanca Conference of early 1943. At the end of March of that year the 1944 "Second Front" preparations entered on a new and vigorous phase. An Anglo-American staff representing all three Services (Army, Navy and Air) made an accounting of all resources that would be available early in 1944, and compiled plans for the invasion.

A GENERAL scheme was submitted to British and U.S. Chiefs of Staff, and finally approved by the Prime Minister and Mr. Roosevelt at the Quebec Conference in August 1943. Administrative preparations then went forward apace, special training of the forces was speeded up, and complete co-ordination by air and naval forces was arranged to the satisfaction of General Eisenhower, who assumed the appointment of Supreme Commander in January 1944. Upon him devolved responsibility for decision as to the actual date of the assault.

Supply, provisioning and transport all had to be fitted into the master plan. Here entered administrative problems of the very first magnitude—the concentration of large troop formations in areas near to points of embarkation, with the minimum dislocation of the civilian population, to be followed by the movement of the concentrated troops to marshalling areas, where they would be divided into assault troops, first reinforcements and follow-ups and then split into unit parties and craft loads for embarkation. Coastal shipping for the cross-Channel transport of troops had to be arranged for, without "robbing" the country unduly of the wherewithal to obtain essential supplies for home and factory use. Loading berths had to be decided upon, and special "hards" constructed to add to berthing facilities. The movement of requisitioned coastal ships to selected ports and points of loading provided many a headache.



WATERPROOFING our assault vehicles for the dash to the Normandy coast was a high-speed pre-invasion task, as mentioned in this page. Here jeeps are being prepared for the waterproofing process. *Photo, U.S. Official*

EVERY planned movement and route, by land and sea, had to be according to exact time-table. For each beach-head secured, ships were to be loaded with a mixed cargo: food, ammunition, signals equipment, engineering and ordnance stores, water and medical supplies, each in carefully calculated quantity per ship. Furthermore, responsibility for transporting R.A.F. materials needed at airfields captured or constructed devolved upon the Army.

Among major considerations which had to be settled well in advance was that concerning types of invasion vehicles. The D.U.K.W.s (amphibious lorries), which had served so well in the invasions of Sicily and of the Italian mainland, required for their manning—for this greater occasion—large numbers of water-trained R.A.S.C. personnel; and for the operating of fast launches in connexion with beach and port unloading, special motor-boat companies had to be organized. For all lorry drivers instruction in manoeuvring through deep water from the assault craft was necessary.

ONE simple type of craft from which troops can wade ashore suffices to transport an infantry battalion. But their vehicles, and tanks, and artillery, necessitate the employment of manifold types of craft. These must all be at the right spot at the right moment, and in sufficient numbers. One problem in connexion with the landing of vehicles on the French beaches worried the Directorate of Mechanical Engineering, until a system of waterproofing was evolved. This not only protects vehicles against the corrosive effects of sea water, but enables the engines to function in a depth of water to which the craft may be not ordinarily adapted. That our tanks drove on to the Normandy shore through six feet of water is due to one of the greatest "rush" jobs of this war.

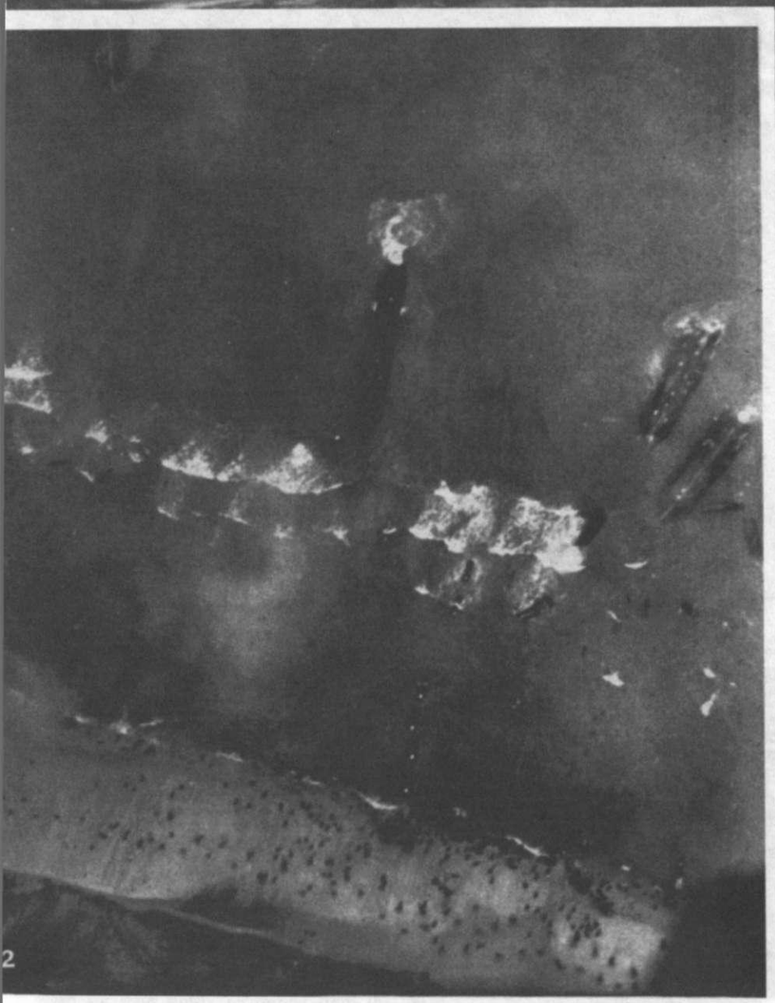
Chiefly, this task of waterproofing the invasion vehicles fell to the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. Enough steel plate was used in the process to lay an armoured road from London to Berlin, and it was produced by the round-the-clock efforts of our combined steel sheet-rolling industries. Army and civilian lorries to the number of 250 were engaged for eight weeks in transporting the material from the 280 factories handling it, to R.A.O.C. depots; 500,000 components the R.A.O.C. received and assembled and then issued to some 5,000 different depots for fitting.

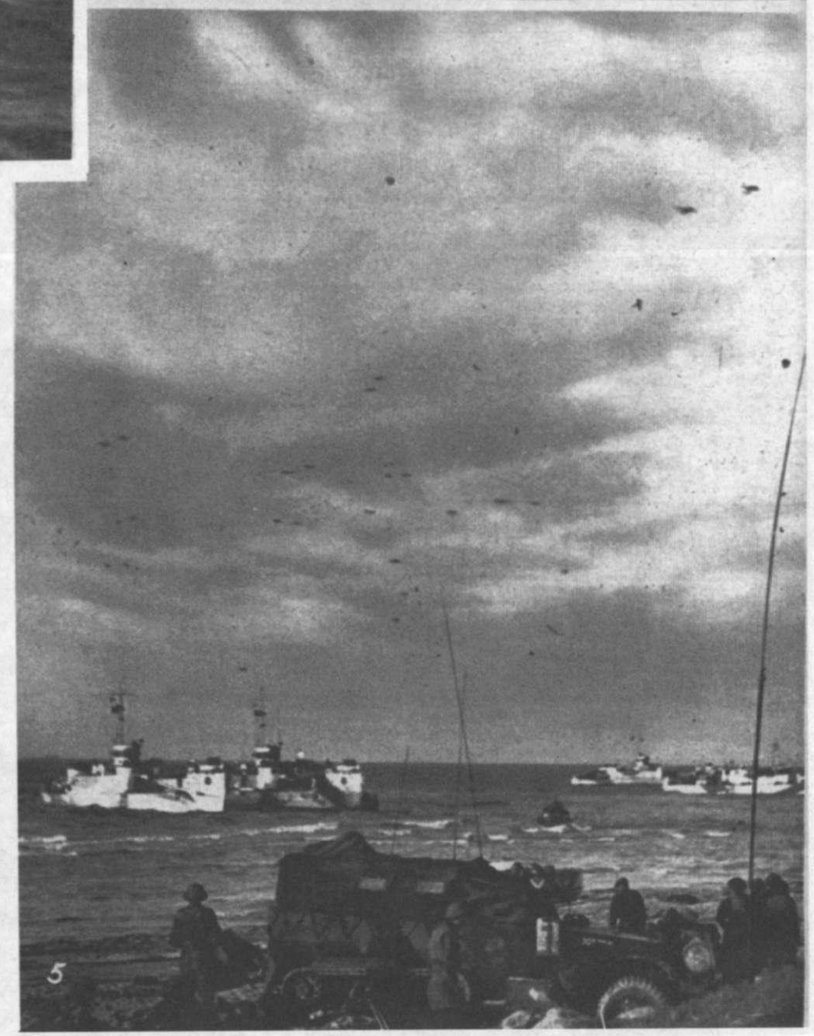
Hand-in-glove with all this went medical preparations, and far-seeing arrangements for the transport of the sick and the wounded from the beach-heads to Britain, either by sea or by air. Pay day on the beaches passed without a hitch, thanks to the Paymaster-General's forethought; and within a day or two of the landing letters were being collected for delivery home—and letters from home being received by "the boys" sharing the brilliant triumphs of those early June days.

Photos, British Official; Associated Press

Allied Tanks and Equipment Pour into Normandy

Shepherded across the English Channel by the Allied Navies under Admiral Sir Bertram Ramsay, tanks and equipment in ever-increasing quantities land on wide stretches of the Invasion Coast in broad daylight. With barrage balloon protection, calmly and methodically the work of unloading goes on. Many vehicles, such as the tanks in the top photograph, have been specially waterproofed to keep their mechanism unaffected by immersion in deep water as they drive ashore.





Foothold Gained on the Northern Coast of France—

Under cover of naval and air bombardment, American assault troops plunge through the surf from a landing craft (1) on June 6, 1944, to the shore, where they are here seen from the air (2). Confronted by withering enemy fire they take cover behind beach obstacles (3). At the end of a day of very heavy conflict in one beach sector, they gained a hundred yards of ground, "hanging on by their eyelids" declared General Montgomery; but a few days later they were 10 miles inland.

Photos, British and U.S. Official, Planet News, Associated Press

—Our Men are All Set for the Liberation of Europe

British infantry and Red Cross personnel (4) wade in from the sea in the wake of comrades who are battling their way inland through the Normandy countryside. Tow-planes and gliders swarm overhead (5) carrying more reinforcements, while landing craft lie close inshore. In the first 24 hours the Battle of the Beaches was won; in a week the Allied front extended 60 miles, with maximum depth of 18 miles, crowning with triumph the greatest combined operation in history.

Canadians Contribute to the Haul of Prisoners

Photos, Canadian Official

In six days from the landing prisoners numbered 10,000. This wayside station in Normandy (top) was a German strong-point. It is now in Canadian hands, and the lined-up prisoners await marching orders. They were still preparing an "impenetrable defence" when the blow fell. Another morose half-dozen (bottom) are seen with their guards; in the background, casualties receive attention. The Western Canadian Infantry Brigade formed part of the British 3rd Division.

VIEWS & REVIEWS

Of Vital War Books

by Hamilton Fyfe

A SWEDISH statesman some centuries ago was sending his son out into the world and giving him advice. Better advice than Polonius gave Laertes, though that was not bad. Oxenstierna said, "Don't believe what you are told, my boy. Investigate for yourself. Make up your own mind. Then you will be astonished to find with how little wisdom the world is governed." I suppose few ages have had more glaring examples of this than the one we live in.

I have been reading a book which shows how the muddles and intrigues of politicians made possible the attempt Japan is making to become all-powerful in the Pacific. That attempt could not have been made, says Willard Price in his Japan's Islands of Mystery (Heinemann, 10s. 6d.), if the mandate for protecting these territories which stretch across the ocean for thousands of miles had not been given by the 1919 Peace Conference to Japan. The risk of doing this was not absent from some American minds. President Wilson felt they might be a threat to the United States. But secret treaties between Britain, France and Japan prevented him from standing out against this gift of enormous value to a possible, indeed a probable, enemy.

It was laid down in the mandate that the islands should not be fortified or used as naval bases. Mr. Price, who is American, blames the "easy-going" officials of the League of Nations, "comfortably leather-chaired in Geneva," for not keeping a closer watch and discovering that Japan treated this proviso with contempt. He does not complain of the secret diplomacy that promised the islands to Japan. That happened before the United States entered the war in 1917, and he says that "if America had been moved to fight for democracy when Germany first flung down the challenge in 1914, instead of after three years delay, it might have prevented the rising of many ghosts which haunted President Wilson at the peace table." He blames "American vacillation and lack of clear-cut policy" for the failure to safeguard American interests in the Pacific, by letting territories vital to the security of those interests fall into the hands first of the Germans and then of the Japanese.

WHEN the U.S.A. fought and beat Spain, the islands were part of the spoils of victory. All that the U.S.A. kept were the Philippines and Guam. The rest was returned to Spain. Spain sold it to Germany for £700,000. The Germans were more energetic than the Spaniards had been.

The Spanish period had been largely a regime of priests who forced their religion upon the islanders with the bloody assistance of soldiers. Rebellions were frequent.

The Germans worked up the trade in dried coconut (copra) and were making a profit when the 1914 war came. Then Japan rushed in and seized Micronesia (which means The Little Islands) before British ships on the same errand could get there. The Japanese made it quite clear they meant to hold them, if necessary to fight for them. So the easy way out seemed to be to give them the mandate to take care of them. Japan did this thoroughly, not in the interest of the inhabitants but of its own ambitions.

Not only did they make the islands strong for use in war; they also introduced new methods in cultivation and new crops which have brought about an economic revolution. Production of copra has been improved and quickened. Some of the finest sugar-cane in the world is grown. Tapioca, used by cake and confectionery makers everywhere in powdered form, has been planted on what seemed barren land. Pineapples and pigs are raised in vast numbers. That is an example of wisdom in government, but the Japanese spoil it by their criminal folly of believing they can make profit out of war.

Willard Price and his wife managed to see a good deal of Micronesia in spite of the obstacles thrown in the way of anyone who wanted to visit there. A German who got in some ten years ago complained that he had been followed about wherever he went. The explanation offered was that he had been discovered to be tubercular, and it was necessary to take great care of him. He mistook hospitality for shadowing! Another traveller, a U.S. colonel of Marines, disappeared and was stated to have drunk himself to death, but the general belief was that the Japanese had poisoned him.

An Island Whereon to Spend Eternity?

AMONG some of the islanders head-hunting still goes on. I have often wondered what its origin could have been. It is now practised as a kind of sport. How it started was explained by one of the "kings." At a time when there was not enough to eat—"too many people, too little food"—each group of tribesmen tried to thin out the population by killing as many of other tribes as they could. Warriors were sent out to trap unwary men, women or children, and fall on them unawares. "If we could stop a young mouth from a lifetime of eating, it was even better than stopping an old one." So what Karl Marx called economic warfare was waged in its simplest form in Palau.

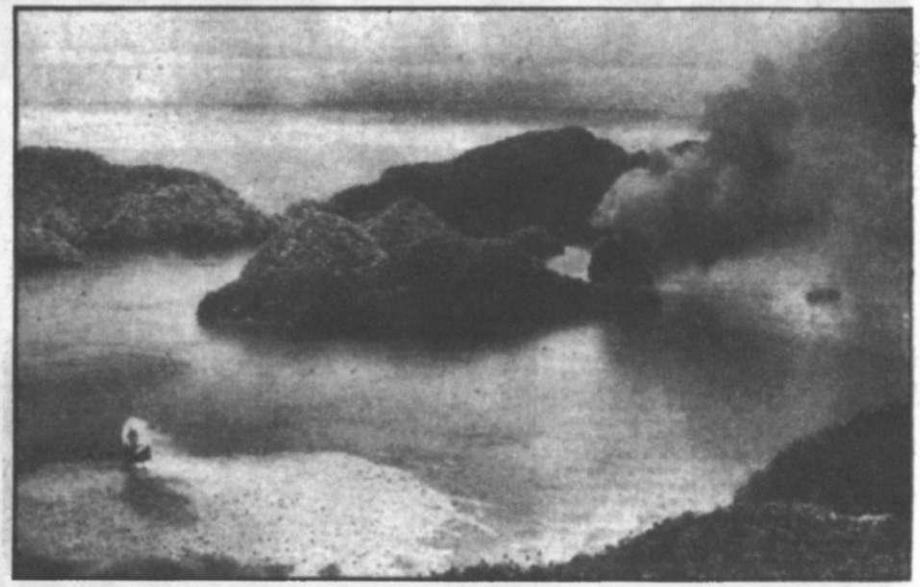
The South Seas have been described so often as earthly paradises that it will surprise and shock most people to learn that the natives are an unhealthy lot. Everywhere the population is decreasing. "Long time ago," lamented a chief, "only old men died; now young men die." They die from diseases of the stomach and lungs. They die from leprosy, dysentery, venereal complaints. These last have been brought to them, as tuberculosis was, by white people. But they have only themselves to blame for weakening their constitutions by living in thatched-roof huts, which are shut up tightly in bad weather and at all times are damp, frousty and dark.

Their ancestors taught them to plunge fever sufferers in the sea to cool them, and to lay anyone with a chill on them as close as possible to a fire. They still do it. Some of them wash their dead chiefs' bodies after death and drink the water, hoping to acquire his strength. So much was their working capacity diminished by illness that the Japanese in self-defence established up-to-date hospitals and efficient health centres.

IT is impossible to avoid thinking that the islanders would be better off if white men had never found them. One of the most intelligent whom Mr. Price talked to deplored the "benefits" supposed to have been brought to them. He said they got on very well without them. They were contented and quiet. Now they were being made restless, anxious to be doing something, even if it was quite useless. "On the athletic field near the school a track has been made where boys may run round in a circle. That is what civilization is—running round in a circle."

But if the people are in many ways disappointing, the beauty of the scenery cannot be exaggerated. While we picture Truk, the Japanese naval base, as a fortress bristling with guns, grim and horrid, it is in truth more lovely even than Tahiti. It is "a cluster of 245 islands in a vast iridescent lagoon surrounded by a coral reef." Once there was a huge volcano here. Its summit was divided up into many summits. The land gradually subsided; only the tops of the mountains were left above water. These are now Truk. There are also pink coral islands which are flat, while the volcanic remnants are like towers and minarets "clothed from sea to summit with bread-fruit and banana trees, coconut palms, scarlet bougainvillea and crimson hibiscus, brilliant against the deep blue South Sea sky." Mr. Price says if he could choose a spot in which to spend eternity, he would think twice about Truk.

It would have to be de-Japped, of course. Well, it will be. And then we must hope white people will be careful not to make such glaring mistakes in government as they made in the past—with the result that we are tangled up in this world war.



SET AFIRE BY CARRIER-BASED AIRCRAFT of the U.S. Navy, bombed Japanese vessels are seen lying off the thickly jungled Palau Islands in the Pacific after the heavy attack there on March 29, 1944; other enemy ships fled before the attack. This vital Japanese base, which lies some 480 miles from the Philippines, was severely damaged. The story of these enemy-held islands is dealt with in the book reviewed in this page. *Photo, Planet News*

Freedom Returns to Stricken Towns of France

ONE AFTER ANOTHER towns and villages of Normandy have had the Nazi yoke lifted by the advancing Allied armies. Isigny, a small commercial town some three miles inland (1), was captured on June 10, 1944. Cheering crowds greeted our forces in Bayeux, and two little girls presented bouquets to the officers who addressed them (2). Capture of Bayeux on June 8 deprived the enemy of the most direct line of communication from the Cherbourg peninsula to the valley of the Seine and to Paris. The Germans flooded the area round Carentan, key transport and communication centre (3), which the Allies first entered on June 12. The town of Ste. Mère Eglise (4) was taken on June 6. See map in p. 106.

Photos, British and U.S. Official, and Associated Press

We Have Won Battle of the Beaches—*Montgomery*

THE situation today is that these landings that we have made on the coast of Normandy have all been joined up into a solid line—a continuous lodgment area from right to left.

The violence and the power and the speed of our initial assault carried us right over the beaches and some miles inland very quickly, except in one special case. On these beaches there were concrete defences and in a great many cases they were passed with enemy garrisons remaining in them.

I said beforehand that every man must be imbued with one idea and that was to penetrate quickly and deeply into enemy country and peg out claims inland. The conception that you land on the beaches and get a little bridgehead, then dig in—that is no good. You must penetrate quickly and deeply. Those defended localities which still held out when we were three miles inland had to be dealt with and reduced later. In that process we had losses because they were held by stout-hearted Germans who fought very well indeed in their concrete-built boxes.

On the beach where the landing of American troops took place east of the Carentan estuary, they found a German field division which had been brought up from behind to thicken the coastal crust and was in process of carrying out an exercise. Very heavy fighting went on on the American beach on D-Day, swaying back and forwards, and by the evening the leading troops were not more than 100 yards inland, hanging on by their eyelids . . . Today those troops are miles inland.

The situation was retrieved by three things—(1) the gallantry of the American soldiers; (2) by the very fine supporting fire given from the sea by the Allied Navy; and (3) by the very good fighter-bombers, who came down low to shoot up the Germans at close range. I should think that the retrieving of that situation from a very difficult and unpleasant situation to a very good one is probably one of the finest things that has been done in this operation.

The Western Canadian Infantry Brigade, which is part of the British Third Division, has been in the thick of the fighting since the first day. The brigade landed on the beaches, went right away to its objective inland and still stands there.

The support given to our armies by the Navy and Air Force has been superb—without it we could not have done it. The heavy bombing of the Fortresses and the other bombers was one of the big factors which made our getting on shore so quickly really possible. Our soldiers—American and British—have already got the measure of the enemy.—*From a talk by Gen. Montgomery to War Correspondents in Normandy, June 12, 1944.*

FIRST FOOTHOLDS SECURED on the coast of Northern France in the early morning of June 6, 1944, our forces lost no time in pushing inland. Behind a massive tank-destroyer British infantry shelter from German snipers while preparing to return their fire (1). Battery of well-camouflaged heavy 105-mm. self-propelled gun-howitzers smashes enemy attempts to hold up one of our advancing groups (2). Allied troops and transport move on through a captured village from which the Germans had only recently been ejected (3).

Photos, British Official

Heart of a Fallen Empire Beats Freely Again—

TWELVE DAYS AFTER OUR NEW OFFENSIVE in Italy, which was launched on May 23, 1944, the Allies entered Rome. Mussolini's balcony, from which the ex-dictator was wont to harangue his crowds, provides our troops with a grandstand (1). General Mark Clark, Commander of the 5th Army (in jeep, left), talks to a priest outside St Peter's (2). Transport in front of the monument to King Victor Emmanuel II (3); it also marks the Italian Unknown Soldier's grave. Romans greet our troops (4).

Photos, British and Canadian Official

—As Allies Reach the End of the Road to Rome

ARMOUR OF THE 5th ARMY rolls past the ancient Colosseum in Rome, which our triumphant troops occupied on the night of June 4, 1944, while cheering Italians line the pavement. Before the liberators, Kesselring's forces were retreating miles to the north, pursued by our advance mobile columns and battered by our air forces. The Colosseum, erected by the Roman emperor Vespasian in A.D. 72, was inaugurated in A.D. 80, by Titus, whose armies at that time were occupying part of Germany. *Photo, U.S. Official*

I WAS THERE! Eye Witness Stories of the War

How We Smashed Into Western Europe

How went the first hours of D-Day? In these personal stories glimpses are given of some of the actions and incidents that made June 6, 1944, memorable as the actual commencement of the greatest combined operation known to mankind—the mighty assault on Hitler's fabled fortress in the West to free the enslaved peoples of Europe.

I PARACHUTED into Europe at two minutes past one a.m. this morning, six-and-a half hours before our seaborne forces began the full-blown invasion of Festung Europa; and I have seen, done and experienced a lot since then. I was near the shore, hiding from Nazi patrols as I watched our first forces go ashore from the sea at 7.15. I have seen a few thousand paratroops and glider-borne troops, whom I nominate now as the bravest, most tenacious men I have ever known, hold the bridgehead against Hitler's Armies for over sixteen hours despite overwhelming odds.

Our job as an airborne force was to silence a vital coastal battery, which if still in operation might have blown our ships to bits as they came to the shore. We silenced it. And our other just as vital job was to secure two important bridges over the canal and river north of Caen, to prevent them from being blown up, and to hold them against all-comers until the main Armies arrived. We are still holding them. They are still intact.

I emplaned in "C for Charlie," a great black bomber, at 11.20 p.m., and we took our place in the taxi-ing line of planes that stretched from one end to the other of one of the biggest airfields in Britain. There were Lancashire men, Yorkshiremen and Northumbrians mostly in our "stick" of paratroopers, the beefiest bunch of armed men I have ever seen. Preceding them by half an hour were the gliders and planes of paratroopers who were going to make a do-or-die attempt to take vital bridges before they could be blown up. Those gliders were going to crash themselves on the buttresses of the bridges themselves, and then, aided by paratroopers, were to capture the bridges and all surrounding land. It was our job to bring them aid within thirty minutes of their surprise attack, and to "infest" the whole area for a hundred square miles around to prevent the Nazis from counter-attacking.

It was five minutes to one when the light snapped off and a hole in the plane was opened. Under it we could see the coast of France below—and a garish sight it was, for flak from the coast defences was spouting flame everywhere. In great globes of red and purple it burst all round our plane as it coasted in and down to the dropping zone. And we were scared by it—until the red light flashed before our eyes and then swiftly changed to green, and we were all madly shuffling down the hole and jumping into space. I looked, as I twisted down, for the church I had been told to spy for a landmark, and for the wood where we were later going to rendezvous as a fighting force. But the wind had caught me, and was whisking me east. Faster and faster I twisted, and I had to wrestle with my straps to get me straight. By that time I had come down in an orchard outside a farmhouse. And as I stood up with my harness off and wiped the sweat off my brown-painted face, I knew I was hopelessly lost. Dare I go to the farmhouse and ask for directions? Suddenly there was a rip and tear in my flapping jumping-smock, and I flung myself to the ground as machine-guns rattled.

There was silence, then two more smashing explosions. Hand-grenades, this time. I could now see figures manoeuvring in the moonlight. I dived into the next field, and began to run at the crouch. And then, suddenly, at the farther edge there were two more figures. They were coming towards me, and they were carrying guns. What might have happened is one of those "ifs" of my private history—only there was a crash of Sten gun fire instead, and both men crumpled up not fifteen yards from me. Into the field stealthily came five men to challenge me—and I was with our own paratroopers again.

For two long, weary hours we wandered the country. We hid from German patrols in French barns. We shot-up a Nazi car speeding down a lane. When we were lying in a ditch on the outskirts of a village, a youth appeared with a German flask full of Normandy wine and, after we had drunk it, he led us, by a roundabout route, away from the enemy. And just after 3 a.m. we made our rendezvous—the bridges. Over both the river and the canal, spans were in our hands and firmly held by paratroop machine-gunners. Only beyond, in the west country, could tracer be seen and the noise of battle heard as we beat back a Nazi counter-attack. And then, at 3.20 every Allied paratrooper behind the so-called Atlantic Wall breathed a sigh of relief as he heard the roar of bombers coming in slow, bombers towing gliders towards the dropping ground.

We watched them in the pale moonlight and glare of flak, unhooking, and then diving steeply for earth. We saw one, caught by ack-ack, catch fire and fly around for three or four minutes, a ball of flame. We heard the crunch of breaking matchwood as gliders bounced on rocks and careered into still-undestroyed poles. Out of every glider men were pouring, and jeeps, and anti-tank guns and field guns—and we knew that if Nazi tanks did come now we could hold them.

And now, as a faint glow began to appear in the eastern sky, our eyes turned upwards and westwards. For there was a roaring that rapidly grew to a thunderous roll that never stopped. We knew the climax of phase one of the invasion was approaching now. Here were bombers, swarming in like bees to give the Nazi coastal defences their last softening-up before our seaborne forces landed. And what a sight it was to see. We were about two miles away, but the shudder of explosions lifted us off the ground. Soon the sky was lit with a green and purple glow from burning Nazi dumps, and still more bombers swarmed in.

As dawn came I moved across country

BRITISH AIRBORNE TROOPS, down to earth in Normandy, promptly dig in (above). The British 6th Airborne Division has won high praise in the invasion battles; stories are given in this page and in page 121. Giant Hamilcar gliders, towed by Halifaxes, are about to touch-down in a French field (top); the fast and light tanks they carry will emerge ready for immediate action. *Photos, British Official*

BATTLE-DUSTY BRITISH COMMANDOS are here seen moving up, with Allied transport, through a shell-smashed Normandy town near hotly-contested Caen. They have been in the thick of the fighting since our assault on Western Europe began on June 6, 1944, and have well been called "the fine cutting edge of the British Army." *Photo, British Official*

through Nazi patrols to get nearer to the coast. Wherever we moved there were traces of our airborne invasion. Emptied containers, still burning their signal lights, were scattered in fields and orchards.

Wrecked gliders littered the ground, some of them splintered to matchwood. There were parachutes lying everywhere. Eventually we reached high ground overlooking the coast and waited until our watches showed 7.15. A few minutes before it there was an earth-shaking holocaust of noise. Approaching the coast under cover of naval ships, the invasion barges were coming in, and coming in firing. It was a terrific barrage that must have paralysed the defences. Then ships began nudging towards the beaches. The invasion at long last had begun!—*Leonard Mosley, for Combined Press*

I Went With the First Glider-borne Troops

I LANDED with the first glider forces in the invasion. It was dark, it was deadly, and we landed in a country of stinking swamps and hidden snipers. Almost the whole time I was there I had to take evasive action from the enemy. I crawled as I have never crawled before. When I left the fighting area I left behind me my face-print in the mud of Normandy's ditches.

I went over with the first glider group from Britain before dawn on D-Day. Never before had I been in a glider, and my own experience has shown me that the men who fly in gliders are among the world's toughest. They risk a crash landing, to start with, and are usually given a hot reception because the enemy has been put on the alert by the prior arrival of paratroops. We took off in the dark with scores of large transport planes hauling the heavily loaded gliders off the aerodrome at intervals of about 20 seconds.

We headed into heavy weather towards France. The glider heaved and pitched. Soldiers on either side of me were sick. I chewed gum vigorously, according to directions, swallowed some seasick pills and tried to think of something funny. I couldn't. The aerial procession was a sight I shall never forget. The sky looked like a giant Christmas tree, aglow with heaving clusters of red and green lights. In a little over two hours we reached the French coast, which was ablaze with light. We approached by an indirect route. Then it began. Flak started ripping through the fabric sides of our glider, but no one was hit despite our slow pace and low altitude.

Suddenly we went into a sickening dive as we dropped our tow-line. "Hold tight. We're going down!" yelled the pilot. Great balls of fire started to stream through our glider as we circled to land. I loosened my safety-belt to remove my Mae West and could not get it fastened in the excitement. I was thrown to the floor as our glider smashed and jarred on the earth, slid across a field and crashed into a ditch. For a moment I lay half-stunned, but the red-hot zip of machine-gun bullets an inch or two above my head revived me in a hurry. I took a wild dive out of the emergency door and fell into a ditch, waist-deep in stinking water overlaid with scum.

It was 4.15 a.m. Mortars and machine-guns chattered. I was in a panic. My one desire was to get back home. Suddenly: "Push ahead, and for God's sake keep flat!" came a voice, that of a captain who had come over in my glider. Chin-deep in filth I slid along, feeling very weak. I drew myself forward with my hands, which were cut and pierced and stung by nettles. I parted some reeds, and the rustle brought bursts of machine-gun fire and bullets from a sniper across the field. I continued to inch along the ditch, getting wetter, colder and more hungry.

At 4 p.m. the ditch was still my shelter. I was still face down, flatter than a worn rug. In my crawling I met Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Schellhammer, of New York. He had been in my glider and I felt a little better. We were able to get out of the ditch and start new tactics of hedge crawling. There were still plenty of snipers around and they began to practise on us, following us all along the hedge. At one place there was a 7 ft. gap which had to be cleared in a leap. Lieutenant-Colonel Schellhammer made it and beckoned to me. Weak and dispirited, I started across like an Olympic champion, but slipped right in the middle. All records for picking oneself up and proceeding were broken then and there.

I had lost my tin hat. Lieutenant-Colonel Schellhammer ordered me to go back for it. I suddenly hated him with a black venom—but I dived back and got it. The tactics baffled the sniper so much that he didn't shoot! However, things improved, and by 5.30 that afternoon the area was cleared of snipers and we reached a little town which had just been captured by Americans. An old French woman came with a bottle of cognac which I gulped. "The Boche has gone. The war is over," she said. Ten minutes later the Germans counter-attacked and the war started all over again. Eager to keep out of trouble I hiked for the woods and spent a miserable night with an American colonel and a very dolorous cow in a clump of super-sharp raspberry bushes.

I wandered all next day and reached a temporary Command Post. That was Wednesday, and in the evening a platoon of Germans raided us as we were digging in.

I was getting shock-proof. I flopped into my hole and slept. Then I proceeded to the H.Q. establishment. A sergeant who watched me from a distance introduced me to his friends as the "best in the hedge-crawling business." It is an honour I am proud to accept. I calculate the Germans used about 5,000 rounds of ammunition on me that first day.—*Marshall Jarrow, Reuters*

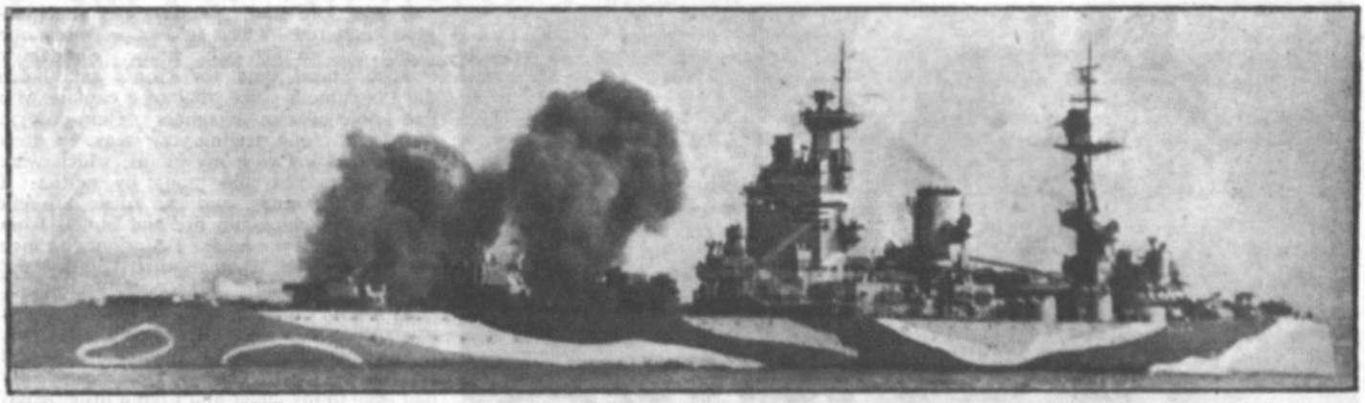
Storming Ashore with the 50th Division

WE landed soon after seven a.m. on June 6, from an assault craft. As our line of craft approached the shore the Navy's guns were blazing and smashing shells into fortifications guarding the strip of the beach we had to take. Just ahead of us, tank landing-craft were already inshore and tanks were racing up the shingle. German 88-millimetre guns got on to them and there were several direct hits which knocked out the tanks. Others came on.

We had no time to see how they got on, as our craft were by this time bumping on to the beach. Three hundred yards ahead of us was a concrete wall about 20 feet high. It was really a road embankment with a road running along the top. It was embrasured and the Jerries were lining the top and potting away at us, sweeping with their machine-guns and hurling down hand-grenades as we swept forward.

Several of our lads fell, but we dashed forward and got under the base of the wall where the Jerries couldn't get at us. More of our landing-craft were coming inshore. I took a glimpse backward and saw one go up in flames. It had hit one of their under-water obstructions. I had seen these poking up out of the water as we came in, but we missed them. They were long ramps sticking up from the sea-bottom like inclined planes, and intended to rip the bottoms out of our craft. In addition they had bottles of explosive attached to the protruding end, which went up on contact. It was one of these that apparently upset the craft I saw go up.

Jerry was fighting hard to stop us landing, but soon the beach was swarming with our chaps. My party worked along the base of the wall and then charged over the open beach. There was sloping ground away on our left which led up to the top of a road where the wall petered out. We fought our way up this slope and got into the wooded ground above. This was full of Jerries. The wood was criss-crossed with low stone walls, just like Sicily. There were snipers behind these walls and they let us



H.M.S. RODNEY hurled 16-in. shells at the Normandy coast while landing-craft sped to the beaches under cover of the terrific bombardment from her guns and those of other Allied warships (see story below)
Photo, Keystone

have it. The chap next to me fell, shot through the neck. He was dead. Among the woods there were also trenches which the enemy was defending strongly. We drove them out with Tommy-guns and rifle fire as we advanced, but the men behind the walls were causing us a lot of trouble and casualties. The first of our chaps had got through the wood and were working round the Jerries manning the top of the wall when a grenade lobbed over and exploded at my feet. I got this smack in the head and was out of the battle. Jerries were by this time popping off with their mortars.

The beach and wood became very hot places, and there was a certain amount of barbed wire among the trees, but it was low and we had got through it without much difficulty. When Jerry went back a bit, still fighting pretty hard, I made my way back to the beach and, with other wounded, was loaded on a ship—and here I am. It was a lively party, but we shifted Jerry from his strong points and everything was going well when I left.—*Sgt. G. Maynard of the 50th Division, as told in hospital to R. Monson.*

We of the Warspite Shelled the French Coast

FOUR men with their eyes glued to their powerful binoculars mounted in the control tower from which the fire of this battleship is directed shouted together "there he goes again!" as a winking light on the shoulder of the skyline this afternoon betrayed a powerful German gun in action. It had obviously been dragged into position overnight to take the place of the battery which we had knocked clean out with our 15-inch salvos yesterday. The new arrivals had dug themselves in near the old position probably because no other so completely commanded our beaches.

They had no intention of interfering with us. Seeing the devastation of yesterday so near them, they probably had a healthy respect for our gunnery, but they betrayed their activity by a few unostentatious ranging shots which they put out to sea. What they wanted to do was to take advantage of the hazy distance between us and them to get on with their real job of harassing the beach without being spotted by guns like ours which could answer back. It was part of the schedule of the cruisers Frobisher and Scylla to investigate certain targets reported to them by aircraft, and so they were instructed as they passed nearby to let the new occupants have a few salvos. It was hoped that the Germans would return the fire and so give us an opportunity of marking them down accurately for the attention of our heavier guns. I was in the director control tower when one of the gunnery officers' team reported "Frobisher has opened fire, sir."

"Now we will see if Jerry accepts the bait," said the gunnery officer ("Guns"). It was a few seconds later that the cry went up from the watchers, of whom I happened to be one. The new, and very temporary, tenants bit all right, and the tell-tale gun flashes from the all but invisible skyline were quickly translated into a target for our "B" turret. Distance, angle of sight and a dozen other readings were transmitted to the G.T. "table" in the bowels of the ship from which all the guns get their instructions.

In the meantime, another of our team had noted the fall of shot about the two cruisers. It was too close to be healthy, and from the splashes we judged the guns to be 5·9-in. or 6·1-in., big pieces to have got into position so quickly unless they were mobile. The Germans had taken the bait wholly, and flash after flash revealed them as they tried to pin down the weaving cruisers.

I took my eyes from the binoculars for a second to peep through my armoured slit at the blistered and blackened barrels of the old "Spite's" guns. They were already trained on the "new tenants," cocked so aggressively so that where I sat 20 feet above the captain's bridge I could almost look down their grizzled muzzles. They were only waiting the order of Captain Kelsey to spit out the inferno of flame and brown smoke speeding their ton-weight of high explosive to its billet. "Open fire!" came the order from the bridge. The Director Layer—an experienced warrant officer—pressed a foot-pedal which can fire all the main armament in one mighty broadside.

Two ranging shells went screaming away through the volcano of smoke and flame which blotted everything from our view temporarily. "Guns" imperturbably noted the passage of the seconds It was amazing how all the crew could tell you exactly when the projectiles were going to burst. "Splash!" sang out "Guns," using the technical slang to indicate that the shot had fallen; and peering through my binoculars I saw two fountains of grey smoke spring up from the side of the hill. We were "right for line" as they say, but a little short. "Up 200" and "right one" were the instructions that sent the next two ranging shots screaming on their path. Then whoops of delight rang through the D.C.T. as the next salvo spouted high above the horizon, exactly where we had seen the gun flashes of the "new tenants."

"That will make them think again, but let them have another for luck!" said "Guns." Away screamed another salvo and as the "projjies" hurtled on their way still echoing faintly back at us the German battery flashed again. "Wait until this one reaches you!" Again we seemed dead on the target, and behind the dun-coloured bursts of our shells a great cauliflower of angry smoke spread and drifted to leeward in a heavy pall.

DURING MOPPING-UP OPERATIONS in a Normandy area east of Caen, important communications centre, British airborne troops move a captured German anti-tank gun into firing position (centre) behind the village, which they had first subjected to a heavy mortar barrage, taking great toll of the enemy defenders. The magnificent work of the airborne troops went far towards helping "Monty" win the first round of the final bout with Rommel. See also illus. p. 98, and stories in pp. 120 and 121.

Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

In the absence of a spotting aircraft to give us a bird's-eye report, we could only gauge our success by whether or not the "new tenants" manned their guns again. There was no sign of life and no further reply to Frobisher's fire, nothing from that direction harrying the beach, and we came to the conclusion that the gun site was again "to let."

Though we had fired until dusk on Tuesday we were ready again by 6.30 this morning. The first target reported to us came at 7.40 when spotting aircraft recommended for our attention a group of transport attached to a Panzer column two miles north of Caen. It was moving south-westerly along a road. Three two-gun salvos landed smack in the middle of them, and then, shifting range a thousand yards, we put three more salvos into some more transport concentrated near a village. The aircraft reported so many of the vehicles destroyed that they did not consider it worth our while continuing.

Then we had indicated to us some strongly held earthworks in a wooded area south of a village. Including our ranging shots we only needed to put 20 rounds into this strongpoint before we received the report that it appeared to be totally destroyed. Next came news of a troublesome German A.A. battery of five guns lying on high ground and, ranging on it, we quickly knocked out four of them.—*W. F. Hartin, Combined Press*

We Carried Canadian Troops to the Beaches

THEY look like beer bottles, these mines, and they are coloured black. They hang on tripods stuck in shallow approaches to the beaches, and you see them if you approach at low tide. They do not hurt fair-sized ships, but if you are in small assault landing craft you have a tough go of it; but if it is at all possible you carry out your assignment—to deliver troops. That was the assignment of Canadian seamen, who were charged with bringing Canadian assault troops on to the beaches when Western Europe was invaded this morning.

I was aboard H.M.C.S. Prince David when she weighed anchor off the coast of France and giant davits dropped her landing craft on to the water. Forty-foot craft churned away in a perfect line, and the Canadians in them tightened their grips on their weapons—members of the crew, youngsters from every part of Canada and veterans of Combined Operations landings at Dieppe, North Africa and Sicily.

They ran into no opposition until a hundred yards from the beaches, then choppy waters dashed them against these "beer-bottle" mines. Some craft were blown up, but there were few casualties among the troops and they waded through three feet of water on to sandy shores. By afternoon seamen had hitch-hiked their way back to the Prince David on other landing craft while soldiers were advancing through the town in wake of scores of tanks. Mines had failed to stop them, and except for sporadic mortar and machine-gun fire there was no large-scale resistance in that sector.

Day broke under clouded skies after we had spent days aboard ship waiting. At first, life aboard the Prince David was as free from concern as a jaunt in a St. Lawrence River pleasure liner. That was appropriate enough, because at one time the Prince David had been on the luxury run between Boston and Halifax.. Then she was taken over by the Royal Canadian Navy and converted to an armed merchant cruiser. After service in the Pacific she was sent across the Atlantic as a mother ship. Technically she is called a Landing Ship Infantry, but if you want to be informal you call her a mother ship—the same name that was given to hundreds of large craft that made part of the fleet of four thousand ships converging on Western Europe. Let Able Seaman James Morgan tell his story:

Our only trouble came from mines. There was hardly any mortar or machine-gun fire. When we left the David and joined with the rest of the flotilla the sea was a little rough, but that was all. We saw only about six German planes and they didn't come near us. As we approached we could see what our bombing had done to the village. Not a house stood undamaged. A machine-gun nest in a church steeple about a hundred yards away rattled away, but one of our bombers swooped down on it. All along the beaches other craft were landing and we would just walk in.

The water was about three feet deep. A bullet skimmed my ear and struck the soldier next to me. I don't think he was badly hurt. All troops got on land all right and they no sooner did than we hit a mine and the craft blew up. The crew were okay, though, and we waded ashore to regroup ourselves and get a lift out with the heavier tank-landing craft that were not affected when the mines exploded under them. Tanks gathered in dozens, and the troops we had carried gathered behind them to advance into the village itself. I saw a couple of civilians run out to greet them. I also saw a couple of French Canadians standing guard over eight German prisoners. By this time there was very little stuff dropping near us . . .

When the David's assault crew rejoined the ship they were cheered lustily by their mates, who had begun worrying about them. The cheers died down as another large landing craft drew alongside. It contained casualties—the first they had seen. They were Royal Marine Commandos. Wounded men were taken to the sick bay and the hastily converted wardroom, and landings from the Prince David continued.—*Gerald Clark, aboard H.M. Canadian ship Prince David*

OUR DIARY OF THE WAR

JUNE 7, Wednesday *1,740th day*

Western Front.—Allied troops cleared all landing beaches of the enemy.

Air.—Allied heavy bombers attacked airfields and railway communications from Bay of Biscay to the Seine.

Mediterranean.—Heavy bombers attacked Ploesti oil refineries, railway yards at Brasov and Pitesti, and Iron Gate canal at Turnu Severin.

JUNE 8, Thursday *1,741st day*

Western Front.—Capture of Bayeux announced by Allied Headquarters.

Italy.—Civita Castellana occupied by 5th Army, and Subiaco by 8th Army.

JUNE 9, Friday *1,742nd day*

Air.—R.A.F. attacked airfields in N.W. France, and Etampes railway junction; Mosquitoes bombed Berlin.

Italy.—Fifth Army captured Viterbo, Vetralla and Tarquinia.

Mediterranean.—Targets in Munich area, railway yards at Nish, and harbour at Porto Marghera (near Venice), attacked by Allied heavy bombers.

JUNE 10, Saturday *1,743rd day*

Western Front.—Isigny and Trévières captured by U.S. troops. Gen. Montgomery established H.Q. in France.

Air.—Heavy attacks by Allied planes on airfields in Normandy and Brittany. At night, rail centres at Orleans, Dreux, Achères and Versailles bombed by R.A.F.

Mediterranean.—Lightnings bombed oil refinery at Ploesti. Munich, Avignon and Arles attacked by heavy bombers.

Russian Front.—Soviet troops launched offensive against Finns in Karelia, capturing Terijoki.

Pacific.—U.S. carrier-borne aircraft attacked Guam, Saipan and Tinian Is. in the Marianas.

JUNE 11, Sunday *1,744th day*

Western Front.—U.S. troops occupied Lison; British reached Tilly-sur-Seulles, S.E. of Bayeux.

Air.—Heavy bombers struck at rail centres of Nantes, Evreux and Tours.

Mediterranean.—Allied bombers attacked Constanza and Giurgiu and oil installations at Smererovo (Yugo-slavia).

Russian Front.—U.S. Russian-based bombers attacked Rumanian airfields and landed in Italy.

Italy.—8th Army occupied Pescara and Avezzano.

Pacific.—Liberators made daylight attack on Truk.

China.—Japanese troops occupied Changsha, capital of Hunan.

Home Front.—First German pilotless aircraft appeared over England.

JUNE 12, Monday *1,745th day*

Western Front.—U.S. troops captured Carentan. Fighting between British and German armoured units between Caen and Tilly-sur-Seulles.

Air.—Over 1,400 U.S. heavy bombers struck at airfields and bridges in France. At night over 1,000 R.A.F. planes bombed Gelsenkirchen, Cologne, Arras, Cambrai and Amiens.

Pacific.—U.S. Pacific Fleet again attacked bases in the Marianas.

General.—Mr. Churchill, Gen. Smuts, Gen. Eisenhower and U.S. chiefs of staff toured Normandy beach-heads.

JUNE 13, Tuesday *1,746th day*

Western Front.—Allied troops entered Pont l'Abbé, Montebourg and Troarn.

Air.—U.S. heavy bombers attacked airfields and bridges in France. At night, Mosquitoes bombed railways and bridges behind the battle fronts.

Mediterranean.—Italian-based bombers attacked aircraft factories near Munich.

Russian Front.—Soviet long-range aircraft bombed airfields at Brest-Litovsk, Bielostok, Pinsk, Minsk, Bobruisk and Orshi.

Pacific.—Liberators bombed airfields and seaplane base at Truk.

JUNE 14, Wednesday *1,747th day*

Western Front.—Enemy counter-thrust at Carentan repelled. Allies gave ground at Montebourg.

Air.—More than 1,500 U.S. heavy bombers struck another record blow at airfields in France, Belgium and Holland. R.A.F. bombers in first daylight attack since 1942 dropped 12,000-lb. bombs on Havre E-boat pens.

Pacific.—U.S. carrier-based aircraft attacked islands in Bonin group, 700 miles from Tokyo.

General.—Gen. de Gaulle visited Bayeux and other towns in Normandy.

JUNE 15, Thursday *1,748th day*

Western Front.—Allied troops captured Quineville, on east of Cherbourg Peninsula.

Air.—Strong force of heavy bombers attacked railway yards and airfields near Bordeaux, Paris, Angouleme and Tours. At night, R.A.F. bombed E-boat pens at Boulogne, and railway centres of Lens and Valenciennes.

Italy.—8th Army troops captured Orvieto.

Japan.—New U.S. Super-Fortresses bombed steel works at Yawatta, on Kyushu Island.

Pacific.—American troops landed on Saipan Island, Marianas.

Home Front.—Continuous attacks on Southern England by pilotless planes began

JUNE 16, Friday *1,749th day*

Western Front.—St. Sauveur, in Cherbourg Peninsula, captured by Americans.

Air.—R.A.F. attacked synthetic oil centre of Sterkrade, Ruhr, and bombed pilotless plane ramps in Pas de Calais.

Italy.—5th Army troops occupied Grosseto with extensive airfields.

Mediterranean.—Allied bombers raided oil refineries near Vienna and Bratislava.

General.—King George VI visited Normandy beach-heads.

JUNE 17, Saturday *1,750th day*

Western Front.—Strong-point of Douvres, north of Caen, captured by Royal Marine Commandos.

Burma.—Chinese troops captured Kamaing in Mogaung valley.

Mediterranean.—French troops landed on Elba with Allied air and naval support.

JUNE 18, Sunday *1,751st day*

Western Front.—Cherbourg Peninsula cut off by U.S. troops reaching Barneville on west coast.

Air.—Britain-based Fortresses and Liberators bombed oil plants in Hamburg, and pilotless plane ramps in Pas de Calais.

Russian Front.—Soviet troops broke through Mannerheim line towards Viborg.

Pacific.—In attack on U.S. fleet off Saipan, 353 Jap aircraft shot down.

JUNE 19, Monday *1,752nd day*

Western Front.—Tilly - sur - Seulles finally fell to British, and Montebourg to Americans.

Air.—Allied heavy bombers bombed pilotless plane emplacements in Pas de Calais.

Mediterranean.—All German resistance ceased in Elba.

Pacific.—U.S. carrier-aircraft sank or damaged 14 Jap warships between Marianas and Philippines..

JUNE 20, Tuesday *1,753rd day*

Western Front.—Allied troops attacked outer defences of Cherbourg.

Air.—Heavy Allied attacks on Pas de Calais launching platforms. Twelve synthetic oil plants in Germany bombed by Fortresses and Liberators.

Russian Front.—Viipuri (Viborg) captured by Soviet troops of Leningrad front.

Italy.—8th Army entered Perugia.

Flash-backs

1940

June 12. *Allied force including 51st Division cut off at St. Valery.*
June 13. *Paris declared open city.*
June 15. *Germans occupied Verdun and outflanked Maginot Line.*
June 20. *French Government asked Italy for an armistice.*

1941

June 7. *Mass Japanese raids on Chungking, capital of Free China.*
June 16. *President Roosevelt ordered closing of German consulates in the United States.*

1942

June 10. *Germans opened new offensive on the Kharkov front.*
June 13. *Japanese landed on Attu in the Aleutian Islands.*
June 17. *British withdrew to Egyptian frontier, leaving strong garrison in Tobruk.*

1943

June 7. *French Committee of National Liberation formed in Algiers under Giraud and De Gaulle.*
June 11. *Island of Pantellaria occupied by Allied forces.*

THE WAR IN THE AIR

by **Capt. Norman Macmillan, M.C., A.F.C.**

THROUGHOUT the twelve days' interval, between the break-out from the Anzio beach-head and the capture of Rome, aircraft of the No. 1 Tactical Air Force of the Mediterranean Allied Air Command scoured the roads leading to the battle area from enemy-occupied Italy to destroy enemy road communications. During the Allied attack against the German Army, Kesselring's supply problem became so acute that he was forced to use road transport by day, whereas formerly he had kept his road convoys hidden by day and moved them only at night. The fighter-bombers and medium-bombers sought their targets with pitiless efficiency. By night the roads were lit by parachute flares. Allied aircraft were flying over 3,000 sorties daily; 610 vehicles were destroyed and 561 damaged on May 26; on June 4 at least 1,200 German road vehicles were destroyed.

Close cover for the armies was given over the fighting zone. Before the break-out from the Anzio beach-head a Spitfire squadron moved in to operate from a landing strip one mile from the enemy advanced positions. Dumps and stores were guarded by the R.A.F. Regiment. The cover was continuous. On June 3, M.A.A.F. flew 2,100 sorties and saw only one enemy aircraft in daylight. The German armies, almost isolated, were unable to withstand the drive of the Allied Armies. Rome was entered on June 4, 1944, and as the soldiers were entering the city about 750 bombers of the M.A.A.F. were attacking railway targets on both sides of the French-Italian frontier. Kesselring's retreat was rapid, with aircraft pounding away at his flying columns pulling north into Tuscany.

June 4 was the seventeenth successive day of air attack on military targets in northern France. June 5 was to have been the day of assault against the Normandy coast, but adverse weather reports caused a postponement for 24 hours. The delay was not for flying weather, but for sea weather for the landing craft. This gave the air bombardment forces a further 24 hours for preparing the "softening" of the enemy-held zone. On June 5, up to 750 Fortresses and Liberators with about 500 escorting fighters attacked bridges, rail communications and radio towers. Mustangs bombed German army lorries. Thunderbolts bombed bridges, railway intersections and locomotives at Conflans, Gisors, Méziêres, Beauvais, and Mons; factories at Conflans and Juziers; and a radio station at Louviers.

By June 6, 25 railway and 9 road bridges had been destroyed, and only one railway and 5 road bridges were standing across the Seine between Paris and the sea; 16,000 sorties had been flown against 85 railway centres, and radio installations had been heavily attacked. Heavy bombers had attacked coastal targets by day and night.

IT TRIED TO INTERFERE with our advance in Normandy, so this Messerschmitt 109 G.6—one of the Germans' principal single-engined fighters—was shot down near our lines in the Tilly-sur-Seulles sector to the south-east of Bayeux, in which neighbourhood some of the most violent armoured battles in this present fighting in France have taken place. *Photo, British Official*

FROM 11.30 p.m. on June 5 to sunrise on June 6, Bomber Command made ten attacks each with a hundred or more heavy bombers against German naval guns and land howitzers along the French coast bombing through ten-tenths cloud by pathfinder marker methods—the greatest single night attack on record, with over 5,000 tons of bombs dropped.

At 6 a.m. on the 6th day of the 6th month landings were made by surface forces on the Normandy beaches of the Cherbourg peninsula. Before dawn the biggest-ever airborne forces had already landed by parachute and glider, and jeeps, artillery, bombs, petrol, ammunition, rations followed by air; light tanks were flown in by Hamilcar gliders towed by Halifaxes. At dawn more than 1,000 U.S. heavy bombers supported by hundreds of medium and fighter bombers hammered the coast defences, roads, rail bridges, and troop concentrations. More than 10,000 tons of bombs were dropped in 7,500 sorties in weather which compelled low flying. Never were there fewer than 200 fighters over the beaches.

Mr. Churchill stated that the Allied air force operating against the German army in this operation was over 11,000 aircraft, a world record force. R.E. Pioneers and R.A.F. Servicing Commandos landed with the first troops, and in three days Spitfires were flying from landing strips in Normandy. The bombing forces grew speadily larger day by day, even bombing areas where German snipers were secreted. Wounded began to be evacuated by air ambulances.

Strategic air power has been applied in recent weeks to reduce the enemy oil reserves. This strategy worked well against Rommel before the final victory in North Africa. Attacks have ranged far and wide over Europe, from Ploesti oilfields to synthetic oil plants in Germany, and storage tanks in Austria and Hungary. Berlin was bombed three nights running—June 9, 10, and 11—by Mosquitoes with 4,000-lb. bombs, and on June 16 by Bomber Command's heavies, More than 1,000 Fortresses and Liberators screened by up to 1,000 Mustangs, Lightnings and Thunderbolts, bombed Berlin by day on June 21.

ON June 13, Germany began bombing Southern England with pilotless bombers, p-planes for short. These weapons, constructed mainly in steel, are not radio-controlled, but directed by an automatic pilot, set before take-off. Here they differ from the radio-controlled glider bomb. P-planes are launched from concrete platforms heavily protected against bombing. Their take-off is assisted, probably by rocket accelerator. More will be known about launching methods following the inspection of platforms overrun by Allied forces in the Cherbourg peninsula, an area wherein were more than a quarter of the robot-planes' launching sites.

The present p-plane fuselage is 21-ft. 10-in. long, with a maximum width of 32½ inches. Wing span is 16 ft. They are petrol driven and jet propelled by a reaction unit mounted above the aft end of the fuselage, and fly at between 300 and 350 m.p.h. Range is about 150 miles. A thrumming noise accompanies their flight. The exhaust shows as a glow and flash behind the tail; when this "light" goes out (i.e. when the engine stops) the p-plane dives and the synchronized explosion follows from five to fifteen seconds later.

The explosive, carried in a warhead rather like the marine torpedo charge—indeed, the p-plane is a real air torpedo, a hitherto much misused term—is contained in a thin casing in front of the fuselage, bringing the overall length up to 25-ft. 4½-in. The explosive power is equal to a German 1,000 kilogramme (one ton) bomb. Since their introduction these missiles have been used by day, but more by night. Targets claimed by the Germans to have been attacked include Greater London, Southampton and Portsmouth.

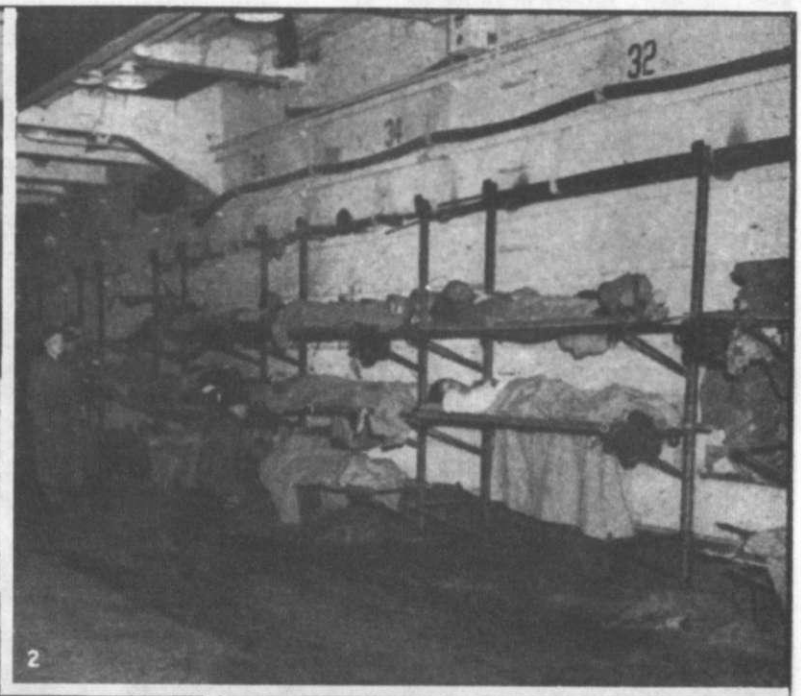
Since the p-plane attack began, in addition to continued counter-bombing of launching sites, Britain's anti-aircraft defences—guns and day and night fighters, including the new Tempest fighter—have been organized to meet the new weapon, and many p-planes have been shot down into the sea or on open country.

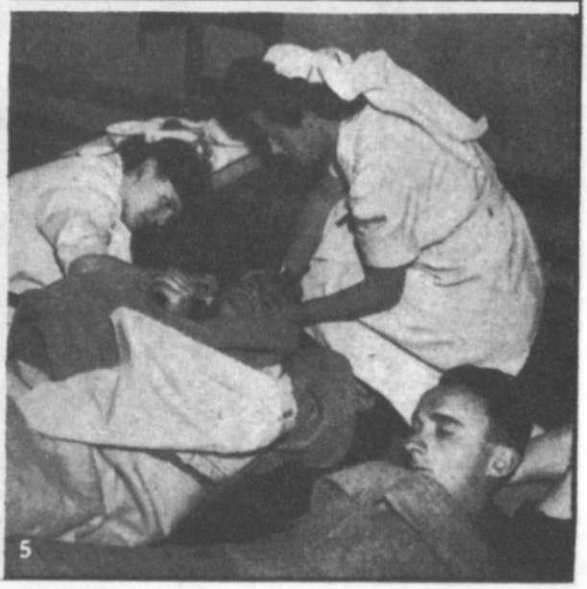
Allied Wings that Rule the Skies in Normandy

SUPPORTING OUR ASSAULT TROOPS, Marauder bombers smashed early German attempts at reinforcements of stormed beach positions in Normandy by blasting road and rail junctions, such as this one smothered by high explosives (1), and covered our landing-craft as these beached (2). Air Vice-Marshal H. Broadhurst, D.S.O., D.F.C., A.F.C. (3) is Air Officer Commanding an R.A.F. Group operating from the first R.A.F. airstrip to be built in France since 1940, from which these Spitfires are about to take off (4).

Photos, British and U.S. Official

How the Wounded Come Home from the Beaches





FIRST CASUALTIES IN FRANCE were back in Britain on the day that the invasion commenced. A wounded man is carefully hoisted from a beach landing craft aboard a troopship lying in the Channel (1). Comfortable on bunks inside a returning tank landing craft, casualties are homeward bound (2), and eventually are helped ashore (3). An ambulance receives a stretcher case for transit to hospital (4), where a blast-deafened soldier gains relief at the sure and gentle hands of a woman doctor (5).

Photos, Planet News, Associated Press, Fox, Daily Mirror

Editor's Postscript

LIKE all celebrated military geniuses, Napoleon made some colossal mistakes. But he had so much practice in war and thought about it so constantly that he arrived very often at sound conclusions, even if he did not always act upon them. One remark of his is specially appropriate to the present war situation. "You may," he said, "win a battle with an army smaller than that of your enemy, but to win a war you must have superiority in numbers." That is what gives us certainty that the United Nations will win this war. We may have set-backs. We almost certainly shall have them. The Nazis are not nearly beaten yet, so far as all the signs go. But in time they will find that we are everywhere superior to them in numbers. Not only in numbers of men. Already we have far more aircraft. Already we have probably more artillery. We have always had more ships. We shall have before very long more of everything. Then the German generals will see that it is useless for them to keep up the fight and, as professional soldiers, they will refuse to sacrifice their men uselessly. They will bump off Hitler as readily as they forced the Kaiser to depart in 1918, and will then throw up the sponge. Napoleon's maxim will have been proved true once more.

CURIOUS things one reads in the newspapers! Here is an item that I had to look at two or three times--"Noel Coward is to fly up and down the Burma border singing in the monsoon rain to British troops." What a picture this brought into my mind's eye—the author-composer fitted with wings, sailing under grey wet skies and piping away hard as he flew! Well, I dare say he would take on even that job. He has had many different ones during the war, and I understand he did them all competently. Certainly his film efforts—In Which We Serve, and This Happy Breed--have been valuable contributions to the war effort. I cannot say as much for his Blithe Spirit, which is now nearing its fourth year, I believe; but it must have added very considerably to his fortune. Its success is due to its knockabout incidents and to skilful acting, but it has amused many thousands and that also is War service. I have seen it twice with great enjoyment.

BRIGADIER-GENERAL H. S. VANDENBERG of the U.S.A.A.F. was appointed Deputy Supreme Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Expeditionary Air Force on April 19, 1944. Aged 45, he was previously Chief of the Allied North West African Strategic Air Force. His decorations include the D.S.M., D.F.C., Legion of Merit and Air Medal. *Photo, U.S. Official*

WAR makes "the common man," as President Wilson called him, feel that he has become—for the time, at any rate--more important. The "common woman" too. Dwellings for the mass of us used to be put up according to the ideas of the small builder. Very poor ideas they were. Houses were built in long rows all alike, and as ugly outside as they were inconvenient within. Now housewives are consulted as to what they want their kitchens and their parlours and their bedrooms to be like. And in Norfolk men are being asked to say what size the gardens attached to council houses ought to be. Some want an acre, others say one-sixth of an acre would be as much as they could manage to cultivate. The latter is about the size of the average allotment. Some people, not men only, but women, too, occasionally, are able to cope with two allotment patches, but it means hard work. If the worker has only spare time to put in, after a day's work, say, or in between the manifold labours of keeping a house going, such a piece of land, 60 ft. by 180, is too large. An acre would mean a whole-time job, I should think. Few people have any notion how large an acre looks. It will be instructive to see what the general opinion in Norfolk turns out to be.

HARROGATE air, known to be of a peculiarly bracing, energizing character, has had a most satisfactory effect on Post Office workers who have been there since they had to leave London because of the bombing. I had occasion to write to the P.O. Savings Bank Department for a relative, who had lost a warrant posted to her. I expected to get a printed acknowledgement in a week or so, and possibly a reply in the course of a month. But within five days after I had posted my letter came a full answer, courteous and helpful, telling my friend what she must do. Mr. Leon Simon, head of the branch to which I wrote, must be a new kind of official—a much better kind than those to whom we have been too long accustomed. To deal so promptly with a query in wartime and with so much extra work to be done is really marvellous.

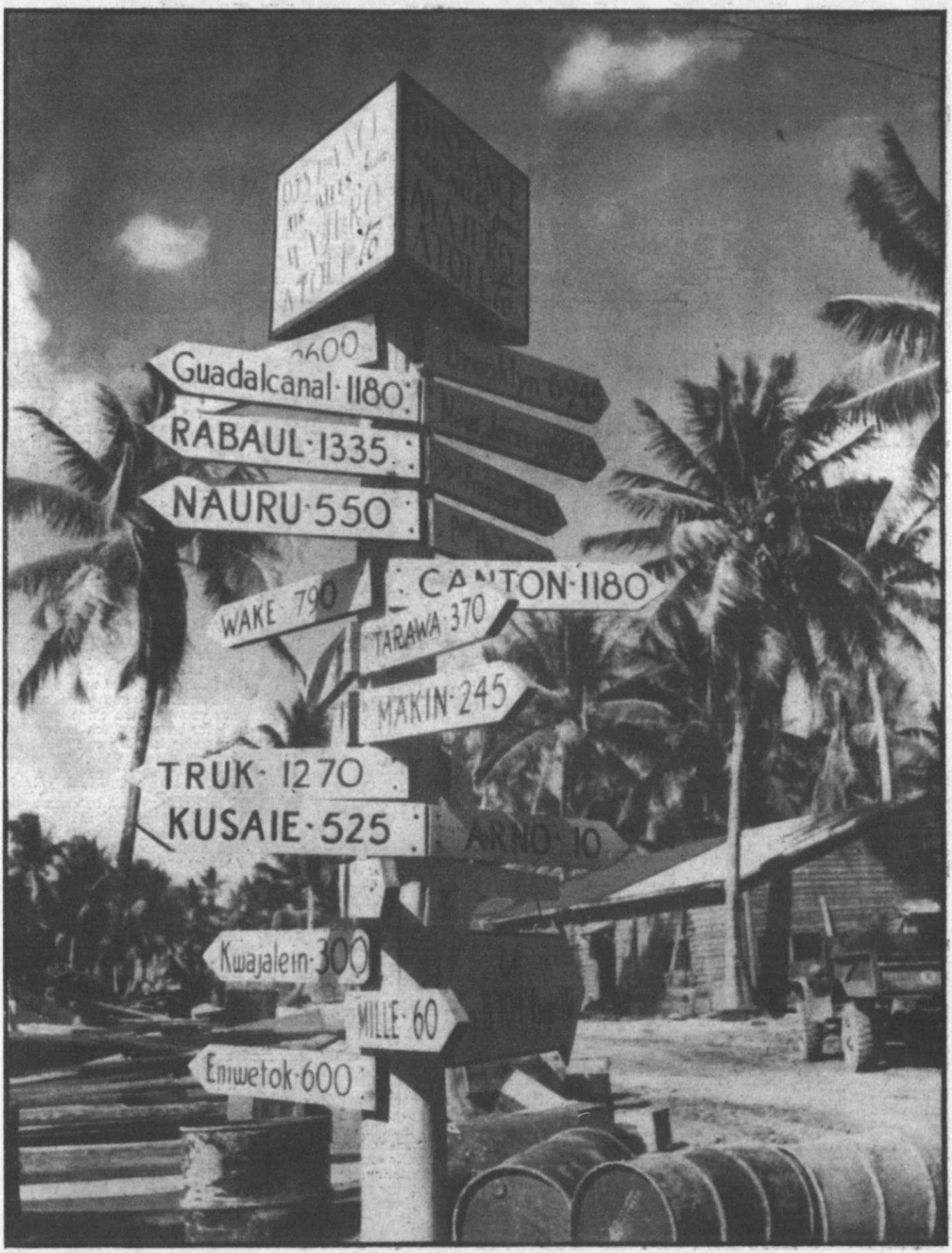
ALL Americans who have come to this country of late express surprise at the quiet way in which we accept the tidings of great events in the war. All Britons who have been in the United States recently comment on the excitability of the population, their readiness to fly off the handle either at good news or bad, and to swallow absurd stories when there is no news at all. For instance, the story printed in a Washington journal that the talk of a Second Front was merely intended to scare the enemy seems to have been widely credited and talked about. A well-known American newspaperman, H. R. Knickerbocker, who discovered where the Nazi leaders had stowed away their illgotten fortunes and how large these were, says that in New York they chattered about the invasion all the time for weeks before it started. He found this tiresome. When he reached here, however, he felt frozen by the cold looks he received when he said anything about it. How is it, by the way, that the original inhabitants of America, the Indians, were the most reserved, silent, inscrutable of beings, while the present Americans seem to possess exactly opposite characteristics?

WHAT is there about the name George that prompts so many people to use it humorously? "Let George do it" has long been a familiar phrase. Why should George be selected as the goat to bear all sorts of burdens? And why do airmen call the mechanical pilot which, in certain circumstances, can be left to direct a war plane for long distances while the live pilot sits back and reads or twiddles his thumbs—why is that called "George"? Is it because there are so many front-rank funmakers with this Christian name? George Formby, George Robey, Wee Georgie Wood, George Gee—I could go on reeling them out for a long time. I should guess that George is not a name many parents choose for their baby sons at present. It may join Marmaduke and Augustus and Cuthbert, which used once to be fairly common and now are turned into jokes.

WILL baseball become as popular in Britain as it is in the United States as the result of its being played here by Americans and Canadians and being taken up by British soldiers too? The last-named, I hear, are in the Middle East being provided with bats and balls and masks and gloves so that they can play the game properly. It is far better to watch than cricket. Something is going on all the time, and going on quickly. There are no long "overs" without a run being scored. You do not have to sit and wait while a batsman walks from the pitch to the far-away pavilion and another walks out. The excitement at ball games in America and Canada surpasses even that of our football matches. As a game to play, baseball is also better than cricket, for there is not all the long waiting about while your side is batting.

POSTERS in London are telling the world that "the British Empire is founded on God's word and on God's Sunday." If any of the millions of Moslems, Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists or Jews in the British Empire read that, it cannot make them feel very much at home in it. For none of them believes the Bible to be God's Word, nor do they regard Sunday as it is regarded by a certain type of Christian. This kind of thing is ill calculated to draw the bonds of Empire more tightly among all its peoples. As to Sunday, that is misleading too. For the millions of Roman Catholics and Anglo-Catholics in the Empire do not hold at all the view as to "keeping it holy" which is held by a small number of Protestant sects. They make it a holiday, not a holy day. And if it is still taught that it was ordained by the Almighty after He had created the world in six days and decided to rest on the seventh, how can we justify resting not on the last but on the first day of the week? This kind of street hoarding theology does more harm than good, I fear.

Pacific Signpost is Victory Indicator



POINTING THE WAY TO VICTORY—and to home after victory is won—is this American-made signpost in Majuro Island in the Marshalls group, in the Pacific, first Japanese territory to be invaded by the Allies, February 1944. Other pointers are directed towards Guadalcanal, cleared of the enemy by Feb. 10, 1943; Kwajalein (Marshall Islands), taken by U.S. forces on Feb. 5, 1944; and Eniwetok, west of the Marshalls, captured on Feb. 18, 1944. Rabaul, Nauru, Wake, Truk, all important Japanese bases in the Pacific, have been "softened up" preliminary to final seizure. *Photo, Keystone*

Printed in England and published every alternate Friday by the Proprietors, THE AMALGAMATED PRESS, LTD., The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4 Registered for transmission by Canadian Magazine Post. Sole Agents for Australia and New Zealand: Messrs. Gordon & Gotch, Ltd.; and for South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd.—July 7, 1944. 8.8. *Editorial Address:* JOHN CARPENTER HOUSE, WHITEFRIARS, LONDON, E.C.4.